The Nation. October 14, 1978 $1

RIAL

OM BOMBS ALSO POLLUTE

Most people blame the nuclear power industry for possible radiation hazards and the threat that weapons-grade nuclear materials will be stolen or diverted. But the environmental and security dangers of the U.S. nuclear weapons programs are at least as serious. Nuclear weapons do not spring from the ground; they are made in factories in New Mexico, Texas, Kansas, Ohio, Colorado, Tennessee, South Carolina, Idaho, Kentucky and Washington. These facilities produce or process the weapons material—highly enriched uranium, radioactive hydrogen and plutonium. They also ship those substances between facilities.

Plutonium, which can be used as a reactor fuel, is radioactive, inflammable, toxic and carcinogenic. Therefore plutonium reactors are thought by many to be an unacceptable threat to the environment, and President Carter was applauded last spring when he announced that the United States would defer commercial plutonium reprocessing indefinitely. But Carter's decision applies *only* to commercial reprocessing. Ever since World War II, the AEC, later ERDA, and now the Department of Energy have been reprocessing to obtain plutonium for nuclear weapons.

The Carter administration opposes commercial reprocessing because, in its view, that would increase the risk of weapons-grade material falling into the hands of terrorists or foreign governments. Yet for the most part the nuclear materials associated with present-day power plants are unsuitable for bombs. For example,

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Special Issue
SIX REACTIONS TO REACTION

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Philip Green

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NEW CONSERVATISM

THE "I'M ALL RIGHT" JACOBITES

PHILIP GREEN

Money is important, Norman Podhoretz told us in his autobiography, *Making It* (1967): It is "better to be rich than to be poor." Power, he added, is "desirable"; it is "better to give orders than to take them." And "ambition," he concluded a few pages later, "seems to be replacing erotic lust as the prime dirty little secret of the well-educated American soul." Whether Podhoretz's readers feel implicated by these "apparently elementary discoveries" is of course up to them, but there is no doubt that they constitute a faithful self-revelation about the editor of *Commentary*. And there is also no doubt that they should be taken seriously. For in Podhoretz's words of a decade ago one hears the authentic voice of today's New Conservatism; for which he is a prominent spokesman. It is the voice of a new class, so to speak; of affluent intelligentsia whose members were once outsiders but now have "made it" to the heart of the American dream—and wish both to justify and to protect their newly won position.

We expect people to defend their own interests. "Looking out for number one" is shocking only when we encounter it in intellectuals who profess to speak for the *general* interest, but actually twist all policy consideration to their own purposes. It is the hallmark of the New Conservatism to manifest its self-absorption in all matters, great or small. For example, this dedication to class interest is apparent in the barely concealed desire to harass, overturn or destroy all those governments

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EDITORIALS.

(Continued from Front Cover)

the DOE does not get its plutonium from commercial fuel. Of the plutonium that emerges from reprocessing typical light water reactor fuel that has been thoroughly irradiated, 60 percent is weapons-grade Pu 239, but the remainder consists of other isotopes of plutonium. For weapons production, these isotopes are a contaminant; plutonium from commercial sources could not be used in even a moderately sophisticated weapons program. Nor do commercial reactors use high enriched (weapons-grade) uranium for fuel.

Only the United States Government, and the governments of other atomic-weapons states, possess significant quantities of weapons-grade material, and the United States admits that it has already lost track of more than 8,000 pounds of its supply. It is widely alleged that some 300 pounds have been diverted to Israel from a plant in Pennsylvania; the rest is described as "unaccounted for," or inventory "slippage."

The principal environmental hazard associated with weapons production is the wastes. A public told repeatedly that radioactive wastes must be confined in absolutely water-tight underground rock chambers for thousands of years may be surprised to learn that in the last thirty years the AEC has intentionally poured 31 million gallons of radioactive liquid low-level weapons wastes—including 190 kilograms of plutonium—directly into the soil at the government's Hanford, Wash. plutonium facility. So much plutonium was dumped that at one point officials feared a critical mass, ready to fission, had accumulated underground.

The high-level defense wastes, which result from reprocessing plutonium, total 75 million gallons, stored in tanks in South Carolina, Idaho and Washington. At Hanford, 429,200 gallons of this waste have leaked from the tanks.

According to the government, all the waste in the ground at Hanford is suspended far above the water table, and none has leaked into the nearby Columbia River. However, one of the trenches where plutonium was deliberately poured is being dug up and removed, lest it eventually become a hazard.

To keep the tanks from corroding and leaking, the wastes have been changed from an acid to a neutral form. This short-term management scheme, however, has created a substance that cannot easily be processed into a water-resistant solid suitable for permanent underground disposal. The defense wastes are, in short, chemically intractable—a matter not at all understood by the general public. Its attention is on the spent fuel rods from commercial power reactors, but these present no serious disposal problem—if underground burial sites can be provided.

As for the defense wastes, until recently government experts were saying there was no known technology for making the neutralized material suitable for long-term disposal. Now ERDA believes that, "if considerable R&D effort" is expended, within about fourteen years, a way to immobilize the wastes can be developed.

At what cost? This year a National Academy of Sciences study estimated $10 billion to immobilize all the wastes at Hanford alone.

Until recently, it was said that getting the wastes out of the tanks was itself an insuperable engineering problem. Most of the contents, though soluble, are now in the form of a solid precipitate, below which are a couple of feet of sticky sludge. It cannot be pumped out, and internal pipes and girders make it impossible to dredge without rupturing the tanks. Now ERDA is saying it can do the job with a combination of hydraulic jets and chemical flushes.

After they are emptied, the tanks must be removed by remote control. (Indeed, the whole project will be remote control.) Can that be done? Yes it can. But, in the words of one M.I.T. nuclear engineer, the project will be "about equivalent to dismantling M.I.T. by remote control."

Government secrecy and obfuscation partly account for the lack of public concern about the hazards of the military program. The people of Denver, Colo. are alarmed because the operation of a nuclear weapons factory at nearby Rocky Flats has spread plutonium contamination in the area. They first became alarmed in 1969, after a $20 million plutonium fire at Rocky Flats. But in 1953, when it was built, no one in the Denver community was told the purpose of the plant. And the government, which knows how to bury a story, released news of the fire on the day Neil Armstrong landed on the moon.

The anti-nuclear power movement has itself contributed to the pattern of ignoring military applications of nuclear energy by directing most of its ire against the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, which oversees commercial power and has little to do with weapons operations. And when the movement does inveigh against weapons operations, its literature typically combines these complaints with complaints about commercial power. Thus crucial distinctions do not get made.

Public pressure on the power industry does not necessarily have any effect on the weapons sector. In 1975, Congress banned the air shipment of commercial plutonium; but the DOE still ships plutonium by air. If the nuclear power industry disappeared tomorrow, there would still be the nuclear weapons establishment.

ELAINE DOUGLASS

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Is There a Parade?

"What is conservatism?," Abraham Lincoln once asked. "Is it not adherence to the old and tried, against the new and untried?" Most of the articles in this issue of *The Nation* are devoted to an examination and critique of the "New Conservatism" which, we are told, is sweeping the country and which, contrary to the claims of its supporters, is "new and untried" in this complex industrial democracy. The thesis of most of our writers, stated or implied, is that it is liberalism that is "old and tried" in modern America, and therefore in a profound sense "conservative." But the liberals seem to have lost energy, imagination and even heart. And so they are abandoning the hard-won progress of the past four decades and surrendering to the new breed of false conservatives.

"We are telling the government, 'Screw you,'" said Howard Jarvis, on the night Californians voted 2 to 1 for his Proposition 13. President Carter put this charming notion more decorously on September 27 when he told a Democratic dinner, "We cannot pass legislation that is identifiably wasteful." (Is it all right to pass wasteful legislation that can't be identified as such?) It is perfectly obvious that Carter is racing to get ahead of the tax-cutting parade he imagines is ready to stampede.

But is there in fact such a parade? And, if so, is it heading in the direction the timid politicians, led now by the President and California's Jerry Brown, believe? That is extremely doubtful. The latest evidence to the contrary is a national opinion poll taken by *The Washington Post* in late September, and confirming earlier ones by Gallup, Roper and the Cantrils. The burden of these soundings seems to be that the American people view the tax-cut bandwagon as a somewhat garish device for attracting attention to the unfairness of the tax system and the inadequacy of the services which the government delivers. (Congress, which scuttled even the leaky tax "reforms" proposed by Carter, might, but won't, reflect on that.)

One very revealing question in the *Post*'s poll asked for a choice between a candidate who says "we should cut spending on government programs and reduce taxes" and one who says "we should keep taxes the same, but make government programs more efficient. . . ." The latter won by 2 to 1.

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"Obviously," said the *Post*, "those are not the views of a public that is seeking a scaled-down government." As Curtis Gans puts it in this issue, "The public wants government to do more and be less."

Those politicians who run this year on "the issues," as against a ragbag of "single" issues (abortion, anti-gun control, anti-environment) are being punished by an increasingly fragmented electorate, divided that way by well-heeled special interests for their own purposes. That is a good part of the story of the downfall of Massachusetts's Gov. Michael Dukakis, a good man nibbled to extinction by crude simplifications, as John Kifner makes clear in this issue. The same thing, plus wads of money, tore the Minnesota Democratic Farmer Labor Party apart and defeated one of the very best Congressmen, Don Fraser, in the contest for the seat long held by Hubert Humphrey.

Are there any real "conservative" values at work in the resurgence of the Right? Do its proponents stand for preserving the best from the past and adapting it to the requirements of the present? The answer, even according to conservatives such as Peter Viereck and Alan Crawford, is a resounding No. Lip service to the general interest is so faint as to be drowned by the loud chorus in defense of the prosperous and their special interests. They are the party of the new selfishness and the new inequality. They are able to dominate the dialogue and processes of politics to such a grotesque extent because they encounter so weak an opposition in terms of alternative formulations of the political and social realities. In both White House and Congress the talk is almost entirely of means, not ends, as if zero-based budgeting and civil service reform can take the place of a substantive struggle to deal with the deep social issues this country must face.

And all the while the war machine picks up steam, despite the talk that there will be a new SALT agreement with the Russians. On September 30 the Senate passed a bill providing money for the neutron bomb with only one dissenting vote (Proxmire's). *The Progressive* reports in its October issue that production of neutron bomb components may begin as early as this month, despite Carter's much-heralded "hold" on it months ago. (It seems that the technicians have come up with a "convertible" neutron weapon, one that can be deployed as a "conventional" tactical nuclear weapon and then quickly converted to the neutron variety in the field.)

It is astonishing that the Left is so mute in the face of all these issues that the Right has been able to set the tone of the nation's political dialogue. Franklin Roosevelt's one-third of a nation—ill-fed, ill-housed, ill-clothed—is still there to be mobilized as a constituency—and there also to be succored by the prosperous majority as a moral duty in a healthy society. As Philip Green writes in these pages, "the New Conservatives can be prevented from implementing their travesty of a social philosophy only if the Left finds better ways to meet those fears and needs." We mean to return to these issues again and again, and that is why we have dedicated most of this week's magazine to the frauds of the New Right.

Group Politics

The primary defeat of Gov. Michael Dukakis at the hands of Edward J. King, the Democratic nominee for Governor, came as a considerable shock both in Massachusetts and in the nation. Proposition 13 fever, the instant analysis went, was bad news for the liberals. George McGovern told David Broder on the front page of *The Washington Post* that there was plenty to worry about when officeholders like Don Fraser and Mike Dukakis were knocked off in "liberal states" like Minnesota and Massachusetts. "Massachusetts Democrats joined the tax rebellion yesterday," read the UPI lead.

This quick reaction, confirming what is seen as a national trend, raises a number of problems. Massachusetts, despite the reputation it gained in the Nixon era, is not necessarily a liberal state. The traditional Democrats of its industrial cities carried Henry Jackson to victory in the 1976 primary, while George Wallace, riding anti-busing resentment, won Boston. Nor, for an important segment of voters, the activist liberals, is Dukakis a liberal. More important, the political shorthand obscures what may be the real lesson of this year's campaigns—the growing power of single-issue constituencies, particularly in primaries.

King's campaign was based not so much on Proposition 13 as on a series of emotionally charged appeals: restore the death penalty, stop tax-funded abortions, make prison sentences mandatory for drug users and housebreakers and raise the drinking age. These issues not only tapped the mood of voter alienation but, and particularly on the abortion appeal, brought King highly motivated blocs of voters and workers. Conversely, Dukakis had almost systematically alienated one interest group after another—from liberals to Statehouse regulars to the state police who, denied a raise, wound up a union meeting the week before the election chanting "Dump the Duke."

The turnout for a primary is lower than for a general election; therefore, passion and organization count for more. Those who are motivated bother to vote. It is nothing new. What is new is the emergence of cohesive clumps of voters with a single overriding interest, whether it be right-to-life or save-the-whales. A candidate who connects with one or more of these groups—gun owners, conservationists, or whatever—gets not only a sympathetic ear but campaign workers, contributions and often an already existing organizational network, including mail and telephone lists, that can turn out a substantial number of votes. In a primary, these groups can carry the day.

Dukakis's national reputation was developed, to a large extent, as the obligatory fifth paragraph in stories about the Jerry Brown Phenomenon ("meanwhile, in Massachusetts, another of the New Pragmatic Liberals, who goes to the Governor's

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academic economic *theory*. Within the profession itself, the 1970s have seen the rise in influence and prestige of "monetarism," the most conservative school of macroeconomics. The crisis of the 1970s has resurrected the ancient tradition of laissez-faire economics in monetarist form. Active government management of the economy has no role to play in this fictional construct. Indeed, any such intervention is thought likely to impede, not assist, the natural recuperative powers of the private sector.

At the same time, the "popular" theoretical economic framework within which journalists and politicians frame the debate on government policy has shifted to the Right. The Keynesian gospel of perpetual prosperity through activist government economic management is giving ground to the laissez-faire utopia of the NCE and Professor Laffer's now-famous curve which is invoked for all promiscuous tax cuts. We are promised endless prosperity, if only free enterprise is allowed to cast off the shackles of government regulation, high taxes and the welfare state. In short, the taxpayers' revolt is reinforced and made credible by a conservative counterrevolution in economic theory at both the professional and popular level.

A particular economic theory attains "orthodoxy" when it is so widely accepted that its assumptions define the parameters within which public and private economic debate takes place. History suggests that such theories never fall as a result of academic or intellectual conflict alone. Changes in the world—in economic and political events—are what unseat dominant economic or social theories. Orthodox theories must not only *justify* the existing organization of society (an ideological or legitimation function); they must also embody enough "realism" to permit the economic and social *reproduction* of society. That is, the theory must provide the reigning elites with an adequate guide to the successful pursuit of their economic and political interests. If they fail in either area, they lose their dominant or orthodox position. It is essential, thus, to understand precisely why the dominant Keynesian theory of the post-World War II period has lost its orthodox status, opening the way for the rise of the NCE.

Before World War I, and for a time thereafter, orthodox economic theory pictured the capitalist economy as a marvelous self-regulating system that always produced full employment. The laissez-faire macropolicy derived from the theory was simple: the government should balance its budget, avoid interfering with business and harass trade unions. Then in the 1930s, the generalized depression in the capitalist world created economic hardship and social tension. Laissez-faire theory could not explain the depression and failed to provide the affected governments with a policy guide to resolve the crisis.

Writing in the midst of the depression, Keynes vigorously assaulted the erroneous assumptions of the orthodox theory and the disastrous laissez-faire government policies to which it had led. "Individualistic capitalism," he wrote in 1933, "is not intelligent, it is not beautiful, it is not just, it is not virtuous—and it doesn't deliver the goods. In short, we dislike it and are beginning to despise it." For the short run, Keynes recommended an activist, anti-depression, pump-priming government policy of higher spending, lower taxes and credit expansion. For the longer haul, he believed that the way to get rid of the roller-coaster instability and excessive inequality of laissez-faire capitalism was to begin a vast social experiment leading eventually to a planned economy; one in which full employment was assured. In such an economy the division of production between investment and consumption goods, and guidelines for the distribution of goods among classes, would be determined by public and quasi-public institutions. The economic and political power of the wealth-owning class would be broken.

DRAWINGS BY EDWARD SOREL

The harsh reality of a decade or more of a stagnant and unstable world economy, combined with the impact of Keynes's theoretical work, decisively smashed the intellectual hegemony of laissez-faire economic theory, but it did not lead to the triumph of Keynes's more radical views on economic policy. Had the stagnation and social unrest of the period continued, the political forces that emerged in support of left-wing Keynesian planning might have won the day. However, World War II and the events of the immediate postwar years created an economic and political environment far different from that of the 1930s. Under these

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altered circumstances, a new macroeconomic orthodoxy evolved which did *not* challenge the existing institutional and class structure of power in society.

By the late 1940s, high employment and an emergent Pax Americana had replaced the mass depression and international economic disorder of the previous decade. The United States was the undisputed leader of the capitalist world and used its monopoly of power to create and control a new international economic and financial order centered around the International Monetary Fund. The multidimensional capital-labor conflict of the 1930s and 1940s evolved under the dual influence of rising prosperity and the political repression of labor militants into the businesslike labor relations with which we have become familiar. The remilitarization of the United States in the post-Korean War period created a huge and adjustable federal defense budget which gave the government a powerful economic lever to use against stagnation or inflation; a lever which, unlike planning, left the power of private capital essentially unaltered.

Thus, in the economic and political realities of the postwar period, it was Paul Samuelson's revolution, not Keynes's, which was triggered by the demise of laissez faire. Military-based "Bastard" Keynesianism, to use Joan Robinson's term, became the new orthodoxy. The "legitimate" economic role of the government was limited to federal budgetary and monetary manipulation. Yet under those specific historical conditions—several of which no longer exist—two decades of relative prosperity followed.

By the mid-1960s, Bastard Keynesian orthodoxy had evolved two fundamental premises: first, that a laissez-faire economy threatened, in the words of Samuelson, "decades [of] excess capacity, unemployment and destitution"; and second, that appropriate government "fine-tuning" of the economy through monetary and fiscal policy would insure perpetual, noninflationary, full-employment prosperity. Its survival as orthodoxy depended upon the general ability of post-World War II American capitalism to keep delivering the economic goods to most of the people most of the time.

Currently, Bastard Keynesianism is losing that orthodox status. The Western world has experienced an economic crisis in the past decade, and that experience has produced the current crisis in economic theory. Bastard Keynesian theory neither predicted nor explained the economic crisis, and it offers no policy prescription capable of curing the unemployment, inflation, financial stress and international economic instability that have recently emerged.

The economic crisis of the 1970s has threatened the economic security of all sectors and classes in society. High rates of unemployment and inflation, financial stress, international disorder, and general stagnation here and abroad have created a pervasive atmosphere of uncertainty and fear of the future. In this atmosphere of uncertainty and insecurity a pressure has been building on and in the government to *do something*—something other than ineffective government manipulations on demand. The helplessness of Bastard Keynesianism in the face of the political pressures engendered by the crisis has nurtured the unlikely resurrection of laissez-faire macroeconomics and the "free lunch" politics of Laffer, Kemp, Roth and Steiger.

In the long run, however, it is extremely unlikely that the NCE will succeed Bastard Keynesianism as *the* orthodox theory within which policy is formulated. Laissez-faire economics is a 19th-century fantasy. It may make great sense to Milton Friedman as he contemplates it on his blackboard (and, as he says, "The free market has worked very well for me"), but it has no relevance to the world of the multinational corporation, the giant conglomerate and the globe-straddling bank. If its policies were vigorously implemented, the result would probably be a rerun of the 1930s, with even more severe economic crisis and more acute social unrest. But the aggressive implementation of NCE policies is an event we will not witness; the political forces that stand in actual or potential opposition to it are too formidable.

Strange as it may seem, considering the enthusiastic support given the NCE by many businessmen, the strongest impediment to the implementation of its policies is the opposition of the corporate elite—the key owners and top managers of the most powerful industrial and financial corporations. In the higher circles of business it is generally recognized that the 1970s have presented American capitalism with a challenge of dimensions unseen since the 1930s, and that it must be met, both domestically and internationally, with nothing less than a fundamental restructuring of the economy. Three related objectives seem essential. First, wages must be brought under greater control and the power of management to discipline the work force must be substantially increased in order to lower costs, raise profits, and improve America's ability to compete internationally. This objective requires an assault on labor union power as well as an increased fear among workers of "the lash" of unemployment.

Second, a much greater share of national income must be transferred from the public to the private sector and its use diverted from consumption to savings and investment. Third, this higher share for private-sector saving must be allocated more efficiently. Credit will have to be rationed to those uses deemed most "productive," i.e., those that contribute most to the competitive advantage of American industry over its rivals. The latter two objectives, taken together, imply that the use of resources by the public sector must be rolled back, but that the authority of public or quasi-public bodies over resource allocation must be increased. In other words, as the Trilateral set sees it, the tax revolt programs organized by businessmen of lesser moment are moderately attractive in the short run because they lower business taxes and create pressure on the government to retrench. But they

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are also a diversion from the more serious and monumental tasks to be accomplished, and are therefore dangerous in the long run. It is hardly surprising, then, that most major corporations operating in California were opposed to Proposition 13, or that President Carter is opposed to Steiger and Kemp-Roth.

A political program adequate to achieve these objectives would, under corporate hegemony, amount to nothing less than the introduction of national or central economic planning in America. Where left-wing Keynesianism failed in the 1930s, right-wing corporatism may succeed in the 1980s. But merely stating thus boldly the implicit program of the corporate elite explains why it could not possibly, in the immediate future, capture the political momentum from NCE policies. There are members of the corporate elite who have yet to be convinced of the necessity of such a program. If it were moved toward implementation, serious conflicts would be unavoidable within the corporate sector and between that sector and other segments of society. Corporatist planning would require such a restructuring of power relations among corporations and such a major alteration of the economic role of the public sector that it would prove impossible in the short run to put together the institutional and legislative vehicle required for its implementation or to organize the powerful private and public coalition necessary for its political success.

In summary, the NCE would probably produce an exacerbation of the current crisis if translated into policy and does not reflect the perceived interests of some of the most powerful forces in our society. These forces, however, are incapable at the moment of agreeing upon, or successfully implementing, a program suited to their needs. The Bastard Keynesians are in retreat. Organized labor has grown increasingly angry at what UAW President Douglas Fraser has called the "one-sided class war" being waged by capital, but its leaders appear confused and defenseless. The net result of this confluence of economic and political forces is stalemate.

Under certain conditions, a coalition might be brought into existence that could move the political balance of forces in a democratic and progressive direction. A number of constituencies which share the fact that their primary economic or political objectives cannot or will not be achieved under either the political-economic status quo, laissez faire, or corporatist planning. Among them are: unions, union members and others who demand genuine full employment at safe jobs for decent wages; minorities who seek economic security and equality; "single-issue" groups such as environmental protectionists or anti-nuke and health care activists; consumer and welfare-rights groups; and Left-liberal and radical intellectuals. If the economic crisis lasts long enough or bites deep enough, if there is a massive cut in social services, if the restructuring program of the corporate elite begins to be implemented, a "restructuralist" popular movement of great power could emerge at the opposite end of the political spectrum. The common program of such a coalition would necessarily include some form of public control of, or restraint upon, the power of the major corporations. In time, such a coalition could easily evolve into a strong force demanding some variety of national economic planning that would be democratic and socialist.

The current political stalemate has resulted from the absence of *any* effective program for dealing with the crisis. At the moment, as inflation rises and the value of the dollar falls, all signs point to a current tightening of policy, followed by a recession sometime in 1979. Meanwhile, the international monetary system is drifting toward panic and Europe sinks more deeply into stagnation. Trade war remains a distinct possibility. What seems most certain in this uncertain period of history is that this situation cannot continue indefinitely. Too many political and economic dangers loom on the horizon.

The NCE is in the spotlight and has political momentum at the moment, but from a historical perspective it appears that its reign will be short-lived. Over the next twelve to eighteen months wage-price controls are more probable than really massive tax cuts, and for the longer future, national economic planning rather than laissez faire is the likely remedy. Whether it is to be corporatist or democratic, socialist planning, only time will tell. □

Congress Doesn't Dance

ADAM CLYMER

Washington

When the United Automobile Workers summons liberals to Detroit to worry about Congress, union President Douglas A. Fraser complains of the "tremendous power of a newly sophisticated right-wing political alliance." When Philip M. Crane, a sophisticated right-wing Congressman from Illinois and the first announced 1980 Republican Presidential candidate, assesses the 95th Congress, he speaks of "small, satisfying successes" and of "the Congress beginning to get in step with the people." When Rep. Abner J. Mikva, also from Illinois and the head of the liberal Democratic Study Group, discusses the House, he laments, "We're such chickens!"

Each of these men can cite examples to back up the view that this is a surprisingly conservative Congress. But before making too much of that judgment, one should note that, of the five pieces of legislation for which this Congress may be remembered, three are liberal by any definition. To be sure, civil service legislation gets its impetus from a

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managerial sense of order and is conservative, if it is anything. And the eventual energy legislation incorporates the conservative's long-sought goal of decontrolled natural gas prices (though only on the far side of several years, in a bureaucratic thicket that mocks the other sense of order).

But the Right Triumphant was hardly on display when the same Congress turned over the Panama Canal to Panama, proposed to the states a constitutional amendment giving the District of Columbia voting representation in Congress, or limited and regulated strip mining of coal, despite the energy shortage. In some of the years before the Watergate majority was elected in 1974, and almost solidly re-elected in 1976, that would have seemed an imposing liberal record, though it pales beside the legislative achievements of the only other postwar Congress that was as heavily Democratic, Johnson's 89th.

It may be that comparison with the 89th has produced the unfulfilled expectations and fears for the future, but while the liberal numbers and party alliance may match those of 1965 and 1966, little else is the same. (The 95th Congress is not prepared to be led, nor is the President much prepared to lead it.) And so, to liberal dismay and conservative glee, this Congress has been far less responsive to the claims of labor, of organized consumers, of the poor than many had expected.

Proposition 13, however, is not the cause. The conservative successes in this Congress, which have consisted almost exclusively of bills not passed (the limitation on federal funds for abortions for poor women was something they got enacted, but it has hardly caused a marked decrease in abortions), started coming long before California voted to slash property taxes last June 6. However, the California decision, when seen as a vote not only for lower taxes but also against government, may reflect some of the motives that conservatives relied on in some of their key victories on Capitol Hill.

Certainly the idea that we already have too much government, causing too much trouble, was an element in the defeat of the bill to establish a consumer protection agency, and it plays a part in the failure to pass hospital cost control legislation. But perhaps even more important are two other factors in the conservative successes of this Congress—Republican unity and business lobbying.

Any time the House Republicans care deeply about an issue they can get 90 percent or more of their members to stick together in opposition, and that often allows them to join with seventy or so conservative Democrats to amend or kill a bill. In the Senate, their unity is less dependable, but when it is achieved, they need much less Democratic help, since they start with thirty-eight Senators and forty-one can keep a filibuster going. In the more partisan House, where the Democrats show no interest in sharing power, the effect of GOP unity has been essentially negative. In the Senate, where foreign policy issues matter more and parties less, Minority Leader Howard H. Baker, Jr. has been able to vary the emphasis of his leadership, often bailing out the Carter administration when its nominal cohorts were restive, as on the Middle East plane sale. But on matters like the labor law rewrite, or public financing of Senate elections, he has been both effective and simply negative.

Just as the Congressional Republicans acted in the realization that after eight years they no longer had a veto threat handy in the White House to counteract Democratic majorities, so did business. It has deluged Congress with visits and mail on issues like consumer protection and labor law changes.

But something more subtle than the reaction to President Carter's election was at work. It started with a miscalculation by labor. In 1974, when the House passed the federal election law, labor wanted an affirmation that its practice of using union treasuries to create political action committees (to spend members' donations) was legal. That assurance was written into the law with, for balance, an affirmation for equivalent corporate activities. In 1974 business was too shell-shocked by the continuing disclosures of illegal 1972 contributions to get much involved in elections, and in 1976 the law remained uncertain as the Supreme Court, the Federal Election Commission and Congress again dealt with it.

The commission's Sun Oil decision affirmed the legality of corporate political action committees in 1976, and though wary corporate legal officers advised caution that year, the creation of PACs was in full swing by 1977. The growth of corporate-sponsored campaign donors has had a direct effect on the lawmakers, and an indirect effect through an exaggerated fear of how well organized they would *all* be in ganging up on one poor colleague. This involvement also seemed to encourage a corporate interest in politics, in lobbying of a sort that had been legal all along, but which many companies thought . . . well, unsuitable, not quite in keeping with a dignified image. The result has been not only the swarms of corporate lobbyists themselves but the organization and encouragement of lobbying from back home, to a degree that labor, in particular, has failed to match.

There are also important personality factors in the record of this Congress. The most frequently discussed is that of President Carter, who had no feel for Congress and surrounded himself with aides of equal inexperience. The list of episodes is endless, from the self-inflicted wound of the water projects decision that taught Congress how to ally itself against him, to the less-publicized economy decision to stop giving out framed pens on the occasion of a bill signing—proud mementos that dot the walls of members and key aides, for whom this kind of authoritative thank you was an encouragement to earn another. Above all, the administration proposed too many "comprehensive" solutions, and followed them up with too little determination.

But Carter was not the only one in a new job. Speaker Tip O'Neill succeeded early, spending his capital of past favors on ethics and energy; but in the

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less tractable Senate, Majority Leader Robert C. Byrd was cautious about throwing his weight around on the substance of legislation, though in recent months he has been far more assertive.

Perhaps more important than any of those easily definable factors in producing a Congress that acts conservatively is the change in the job of legislator and in the men and women who occupy it. O'Neill frequently holds forth, with longing but without real complaint, on the old days when members respected authority. Today, they just don't. As Rep. Robert N. Giaimo, chairman of the Budget Committee, has observed, the poorest plea to make to a wavering junior member is "Stick with the committee."

Nor is the disappearance of the "to get along, go along" style the only change. Members of Congress are constantly on the run. A study made of the House last year found that they had only eighteen minutes a day to think. Whatever the validity of that statistic, Congressmen who work at getting re-elected are incessantly flying back to their districts, devoting an extraordinary amount of time to local issues, or to local delegations arguing national issues. Not only are businessmen lobbying; so also are unions, foes and supporters of federally funded abortions, or the Equal Rights Amendment, or fighter bombers for the Middle East. And even when the members are here in Washington, legislating, the "reform" sharing of power has produced more subcommittee chairmen who produce more bills. This activity obliges everyone to vote more often, with less time to consider what those votes entail.

Problems like these, with the consequent weakening of parties and caucuses, and the consequent ineffectiveness of platforms as yardsticks or prods for Congressional performance, will be a major topic of the UAW's October 17th meeting in Detroit, where perhaps seventy-five to 100 unions and other liberal groups will participate in a search for institutional ways to make Congress and President Carter work as they should. As Fraser's letter of invitation put it, one object is to seek devices whereby the Democratic Party will become "in fact what in principle it has proclaimed itself to be since the New Deal—a progressive party struggling against the reactionary capitalist money power of the Republicans, to transform America into a fair and decent society."

But it isn't just procedures that have changed, nor can new systems change them again. As the spate of retirements, even by middle-rank members, has shown, the Congressional job lacks the satisfactions it once brought. The pace has grown hotter and the respect has cooled. The public, however justly, has finally taken to heart Mencken's advice that the only way to look at a Congressman is down. And the scorn is not reserved only for members. A senior House staff aide observed the other day that the public contempt for Congress has touched him, too. "My mother is intensely proud of where I work, but she takes a lot of grief about it, from the women in the sewing circle, the garden club," he said.

In this atmosphere, some senior members of Congress believe, their juniors do not have the time or stability to judge which popular moods should be taken seriously and which will disappear. One of the sillier exhibitions the House put on this year was passing a series of 2 percent across-the-board appropriations cuts—just to prove it was in step with Proposition 13. "You can stampede the House faster than a herd of cattle," observed Mikva sourly of this performance. Eventually the leadership reasserted control, and by the time the foreign aid appropriation, traditionally one of the easier targets for cuts, reached the floors, it emerged largely unscathed from the House and later from the Senate.

Whatever its short-term effect on appropriations bills in 1978, Proposition 13 does seem to be having the longer-term effect of locking into place attitudes about government that were already there. Only the most modest new liberal programs, matters like a consumer cooperative bank, had much support in this Congress to begin with, although there remained substantial rhetorical, if not effective, backing for national health insurance.

Even Sen. George McGovern, who as president of Americans for Democratic Action rose to denounce the Proposition 13 phenomenon with the assertion, "I continue to be a liberal—a believer in dynamic government unafraid to set important goals and to persist in their achievement," now sees things a little differently. In that June 17th speech, where his accusations of hedonism and racism in the California vote got the headlines, the South Dakota Democrat called for a reaffirmation of liberal approaches. "We can offer

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financial relief by enacting programs instead of dismantling government. A common sense program of nutrition, education and preventive health care could cut the nation's medical bill by one-fourth or more." But recently he said in an interview that a realistic reading of the national mood led him to be "prepared to concede that it might be more practical for the next year or so to concentrate on Congressional oversight on programs already in operation, with the end in mind of making them work better, eliminate some of the boondogglery, make them more effective, more efficient, and go slowly on new legislative initiatives. We've already made a decision to do that in the case of the child nutrition program."

McGovern does not set agendas, but if he is not disposed to push for new liberal programs, who in the Senate will be? He casually suggests that restructuring the medical system to emphasize preventive care is more important now than national health insurance. Crane and his allies may have fewer victories in the next Congress, because they will have fewer liberal programs to beat.

Of course, spending programs are not the only indicators of liberalism in Congress. Those single-issue lobbying groups who plague members over abortion or the Equal Rights Amendment or details of the criminal code legislation operate in an environment outside the spending arena. In some ways it is a more difficult one for Congressmen: spending figures can almost always be compromised; many of these issues cannot.

It is hard to see a clear pattern, conservative or liberal, among these "emotional" issues. Congress made it harder for poor women to get abortions, but may yet make it easier to adopt the Equal Rights Amendment. The Senate's revision of the criminal code will die in the House, but the wounds were inflicted equally by the advocates of the death penalty and by critics of broader conspiracy legislation. And whether that bill passed or not, it was never as bad for either the conservative or the liberal cause as the respective camps of detractors argued.

That leaves the almost equally muddled area of foreign policy. The liberals prevailed this year on the Panama Canal issue, with crucial help from Baker and some other Republicans. But the strategic arms agreement that may be settled next year is another matter. Baker has minimum regard for arms negotiator Paul Warnke, and says he expects to oppose the treaties. Even with Baker on their side, proponents would have a hard time getting the required two-thirds majority, because of likely opposition from Democrats like Henry Jackson. Without Baker it would probably be impossible. But that question, not health insurance or full employment or any social issue, may be the key to the next session of Congress.

However the elections come out, the legislature will probably remain conservative, in the sense that it will be very cautious about anybody's solution for anything—especially anybody's simple solution. For example, the Kemp-Roth tax bill, likely to be reintroduced to cut income taxes by a third in two years instead of this year's three, will probably get more votes, but still not enough to pass. If there are any conservative programs waiting around to be introduced (conservatives push Kemp-Roth, but it reads like a liberal Democratic program), they will almost certainly meet the same cold welcome that awaits new liberal schemes.

That may leave an agenda of tinkering that is neither liberal nor conservative, or conservative without offending liberals—more deregulation, perhaps, in the wake of the airline measure.

Civil service reform legislation sounds conservative (although that bill was guided through the House by 1976's leading Democratic liberal, Morris K. Udall) because conservatives have fought the bureaucracy and made it an issue. As Mikva conceded, that doesn't make much sense, because the liberals are the ones who want government to do more and who should therefore want a functioning bureaucracy, while conservatives, who want government to do less, should not mind its inaction. Whether or not it makes much sense, that kind of issue is more likely to preoccupy the 96th Congress than any bold new plans to solve new problems or, for that matter, any vigorous efforts to stop solving any of the acknowledged old problems.

This will be so, not so much because of brilliant tactical maneuvers by the conservatives or blunders by the liberals but because it is a function of time. The last fifteen years have seen the enactment of most of the liberal programs that were thoroughly thought out (and some that weren't) and enjoyed significant popular support. The current political pressures of inflation and high taxes make this a season that doesn't welcome much more change. □

Conservatism By Default

CURTIS B. GANS

Adversity can also be the mother of invention. The adversities of the moment are the setbacks being suffered by liberals in both national and local politics, and which can be seen only as inimical to liberal democratic governance. To wit:

- The overwhelming vote in favor of California's Proposition 13 and the emerging national tax revolt.
- The inability of the women's movement and its allies to win support in enough state legislatures to insure ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment.
- Congress's patent lack of interest in legislation to achieve tax reform, welfare reform, national health

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insurance, gun control or even full employment.

• The 4-to-1 and up to 10-to-1 votes to repeal gay rights ordinances in city after city, and the enactment of various national and local legislative riders restricting the use of public funds for legalized abortions.

The inventions of the moment are the reasons liberals are giving to explain away their adversity. To wit:

• That a conservative tide is sweeping the nation and the nation is drifting with the force of it to the political Right.

• That the political force of former Goldwater and Wallace supporters and present Reaganites—what is loosely termed "the radical Right"—has been given such an infusion of money, talent and direction that it now constitutes a major danger to the country and is the generating cause for the reactionary drift.

These explanations, if true, would fully explain the reverses that liberals have recently suffered. They are inventions, however, precisely because they don't ring true.

There is no evidence that public attitudes today are more conservative than they were ten years ago. To be sure, fewer Americans are willing to identify themselves as liberals in response to public opinion surveys and a larger number call themselves conservatives. But on the issues of the day, the social and political attitudes of the American people have remained remarkably consistent and remarkably liberal.

According to almost all surveys, but most notably surveys taken in early 1978 by *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, very few Americans wished to roll back any of the social programs initiated by the New Deal and its political progeny—the Fair Deal, New Frontier and Great Society. By wide margins, the public continues to support Social Security, Medicare, aid to education, desegregation of schools, housing, employment, public accommodation and the ballot box. It also endorses governmental intervention to stimulate economic growth, provide jobs and eliminate poverty.

By equally wide margins, the public favors detente with the Soviet Union, normalization of relations with mainland China, and treaties to limit the spread of nuclear weapons and reduce strategic armaments. Nor are Americans content to rest with what has already been accomplished. They also approve of abortion on demand, gun control, the Equal Rights Amendment, tax reform, welfare reform and legislation to provide subsidies for full employment, a cleaner environment, aid to cities and urban mass transit.

(Even in areas of public concern—most notably those relating to abortion and gay rights—where the public through legislative action or referendums has shown a somewhat less than permissive attitude, the situation is a dramatic improvement from those days not ten years ago when abortions were illegal and homosexuals were scared to come out of the closet.) Whatever the current American attitude is, it is certainly *not* conservative.

Nor is there any evidence that the so-called radical Right is a more powerful force than it has been in the past. Despite increased funding, made possible by recent campaign finance laws which permit substantial contributions from corporate political action committees, and better organization and direction—due in some measure to Richard Viguerie's not inconsiderable skills as a direct mail consultant, list collector and propagandist—the radical Right is substantially less influential today than it was fourteen years ago when it managed to nominate a candidate for President in one of the nation's two major political parties.

The present capabilities of the radical Right are clearly delimited.

• It can, in conjunction with single-issue activists, frighten legislators from marginal districts, restraining them from voting for laws wanted by the public as a whole. Hunters, frightened homeowners, the National Rifle Association and the radical Right have managed for years to block gun-control legislation.

• In certain states, most notably in the Rocky Mountains and South, the radical Right controls the Republican Party organization. However, with the notable exceptions of Wyoming and Utah, these are precisely the states where the GOP finds it hardest to win statewide elections.

• In other states—when primaries attract extremely low turnout, as happened this year in Iowa and New Jersey—the radical Right can sometimes nominate one of its own for Governor or Senator. But in the general elections that follow, those right-wing candidates almost invariably lose.

• Because Barry Goldwater built his insurgency on the right wing and because Ronald Reagan depended for his national base on exactly the same political elements, the radical Right retains a disproportionate share of power within the Republican Party. It may not be able to win elections, but it can force the Republicans to lose by, for instance, dictating their choice of Vice Presidential nominee.

All of which is to say that—whatever the radical Right may be—nuisance, irritant, roadblock on certain specific and unusually peripheral issues, potential destroyer of the GOP—it is not the cause of the legislative logjam on Capitol Hill, the taxpayer revolt in the hinterlands, or the growing sense of rudderlessness and drift in the nation as a whole. The explanation of these trends—none of which is necessarily conservative—lies elsewhere.

Part of the explanation may rest, as Amitai Etzioni suggests in a recent issue of *Psychology Today*, and as Hadley Cantril and Lloyd Free found a decade ago, in the innate political schizophrenia of the American voting public. It wants government to redress the inequities in American life. It is also frightened by, and feels impotent in, the face of big government. It wants government to do more and be less. But this tendency has been around in America for some time and as such cannot explain the present lack of direction. A larger part of the answer

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can perhaps be found behind three important trends of the times:

(1) The revolt of the middle-class taxpayer. Of all the recent developments in American politics, the one that might truly be called conservative is the growing disinclination of an increasing number of citizens to contribute to the public till to meet public needs. Its most publicized expression has been the victory of California's Proposition 13, but it can be seen also in the defeat in state after state of bond issues for such items as schools, housing and roads.

Yet this resistance is caused less by a growing conservatism in America than by the failure of liberal government to address successfully the very real problems of inflation and government waste. Expansive liberal materialism is clashing with a shrinking dollar, and liberals have failed to re-examine either their materialist premises or the validity of New Deal economics.

(2) Stasis on Capitol Hill. The conventional explanation for the fact that Congress has singularly failed to attack the central problems confronting American society this year and last is the lack of leadership and of effective executive-legislative liaison.

But the failure of Congress to enact what the nation needs is to be blamed less on President Carter, Robert Byrd or even Frank Moore than on the decay of the American political party system. Leadership can be effective only when there is some common agreement on national goals and some cohesion and discipline to convert those goals into public policy. For very different reasons, neither of the two major political parties offers any coherent set of goals nor possesses any internal discipline.

(3) The disaffected electorate. The very complexity of the American political system tilts toward conservatism. Only a massive assertion of the public will can energize the machinery of government for political and social change. It took five decades of preparation and four years of intense and disciplined social protest before Congress passed civil rights legislation. It took eight years of intense and sometimes even violent domestic conflict to end the war in Vietnam.

Yet the central political feature of this age is the vast number of Americans—15 million in the last decade—who have dropped out of the political process, and the millions more who give only lip service to political participation because they no longer believe that government and politics can meaningfully improve the quality of their lives.

The present adversity is rooted, therefore, not so much in a revival of American conservatism as in a decline of public faith in American liberalism; not so much in the rise of a militant radical Right as in the declining participation of the American Center and Left; not so much in the nation's new rightward orientation as in its total lack of orientation and an erosion of the institutions of political cohesion and programmatic delivery.

But, whatever the cause, the effect may in the end be the same. For unless the liberals—instead of inventing a conservative revival—begin to face the real problems underlying the political crisis now facing America, they will have a conservative revival by default. □

Carter the Acceptable

NICHOLAS VON HOFFMAN

It is true that no society, however strong its commitment to civil liberties, can allow unlimited dissent. Unless a few basic rules of political conduct are agreed upon, all disagreements are in danger of being settled by a chaotic form of violence. Free speech, the sanctity of the ballot—a few such things make up the ground rules that everyone abides by; but we have whittled permissible conduct down to much less than that. By denominating any dissent that questions first principles of policy as "irresponsible," "ideological," "radical," or "extremist," political debate can be stopped and dismissed as pathological zealotry. No major forum is open to you unless what you have to say is defined as responsible, middle-of-the-road, and pragmatic. The practical, nonideological workman who is thus exalted turns out to be the Dr. Strangelove of our satirical literature and the Bob Haldeman of real political fact. The road on the middle of which so many walk to avoid the perils of fuzzy fanaticism can lead to Oz and beyond to the land of the Hobbits. The practical, hard-nosed, tough-minded, no-nonsense, realistic military men who explained they had to destroy the South Vietnamese city of Hue to save it from the Communist enemy gave America a cliche phrase that reminds us that where there is no Right and no Left, where the discussion of politics is limited to means, never ends, the people we call moderates, gradualists and practitioners of the pragmatic can be stark, staring crackers, and we won't know it. Politics, the men of the middle repeat and repeat, is the art of the possible. Yet in Vietnam the most practical men of affairs attempted the impossible, squandering American power as Athenian power was wasted before Syracuse. Opposition sharpens judgment and forces men and women in high places to be practical; a yes-man ambiance enervates the faculties needed to recognize reality. This, as much as that nebulous phrase, the arrogance of power, explains why these people did what they're always

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accusing their opponents, the ideologues, of doing—they acted impractically.

Franklin Roosevelt once remarked, "There's one issue in this campaign. It's myself, and people must be either for me or against me." That is the issue in almost every campaign, the character of the candidates. In a political system which excludes broad policy questions from the electoral process, what else is there to fasten on than the candidates' individual traits? If a Jimmy Carter gives what may seem like an excessive amount of time to striking poses in public, he's not being hollow and manipulative as much as he's trying to live up to the exigencies of his position.

Television makes this sort of posturing intrusively visible. Carter's carefully done plebeian inauguration, walking hand in hand with his family and inviting the wash-and-wear multitudes to his balls, is in line with what many of his predecessors did for effect. Though TV isn't the cause of personality politics, which far antedates the medium, it facilitates it. It's ever so much better to make your evaluation of the man by seeing him—something less than 1 percent of the population probably got to do before TV—than by being told what he's like.

Electoral politics, like farming and many another activity, has gone from being a labor-intensive to a capital-intensive business. Television, as well as expensively computerized mail-order, money-solicitation operations, has put the paid political worker, the old-time precinct captain, into the museum next to the exhibit of the interurban trolley car. Since

advertising, especially what is considered garish advertising, is slightly declasse among upper-middle-class Americans, many think using such techniques and tactics denigrates the dignity of the Presidency. Perhaps it does, but with candidates who basically agree with one another, what are you going to do if you don't conduct the campaign with singing commercials and minor theatrical diversions? The singing commercials will vanish as soon as the boys and girls disagree.

If elections don't bear heavily on the decision-making processes, they are nonetheless indispensable to the symbol system. We have elections, ergo we know we are a democracy. In truth, the United States is as much of a democracy as any comparable nation, but its representational system isn't especially dependent on electing our magistrates. Representation comes primarily through organizational affiliation—the brokered government that political scientists write about—and through feedback devices like the public opinion polls and the journalistic springer spaniels and Irish setters who course the countryside, coming to attention and pointing at each new trend and tremor of taste and opinion.

The significance of elections is not enhanced by the general aversion to anything thought to smack of "partisanship" or "partisan advantage." These words have an even smellier reputation than the adjective "political," so it's no surprise that, excepting Nixon, the progression from administration to administration is so reassuringly smooth. A Jerry Ford goes and a Jimmy Carter comes and appoints not only the same old people but also the same new people. Carter himself has disappointed many who worked for him and hoped for him, but working within the system deprives one of new possibilities. If there is no thesis and if there is no antithesis, there can be no synthesis. In an organizational universe of managers and problem solvers, there's no dialectic.

No ideas, no change can be generated by such politics. It was long ago commented on that the two parties are sterile, unable to conceive, invent, or create, and have depended on third parties for new ideas. In the 1960s and the 1970s, the civil rights movement and the anti-war people provided the agenda and framed the debate. Left to the law courts, the national legislature, or the electoral process, Rosa Parks would still be riding the streets of Montgomery, Ala. in the back of a bus; the B-29s would still be attempting to interdict the military supplies moving into South Vietnam on the Ho Chi Minh Trail. You can't work within the system, because the system doesn't work. To effect change you have to threaten a slave rebellion, start a riot, set off a mini-revolution, induce a galvanic event outside the marble-pillared buildings with concussion waves severe enough to disturb the eternally mortuarial tranquillity within.

Elective or electoral politicians can't make such loud noises. In the lingo of the pros, "issue-oriented" people destroy their own political effectiveness, i.e.,

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they make it impossible for themselves to get elected. The paradox is that the politically effective people can't get anything done, while the ineffective people, a Martin Luther King, a Ralph Nader, a Saul Alinsky, can't get elected but can get things done.

Jimmy Carter is almost prototypical then. Effective at getting elected, he is ineffective at realizing the changes candidate Carter seemed to have been promising the voting multitudes. In actuality, the Carter campaign was the traditional one of whichever party does not control the White House. Whether Jimmy the Baptist and his advisers consciously chose an anti-Washington stance or merely drifted into it, they were reciting the classic lines of the challenger in our election rituals. A detached reading of Carter's stump locutions will show that he never suggested a new relationship between government and the individual or the society. That would entail a decentralist upheaval of near-revolutionary proportions, something for which there is great support among individual Americans and none among organized power groups—and Jimmy Carter is assuredly a power-group person. Carter in 1976 was well to the Right of William Jennings Bryan, who told America in 1919, "Our greatest task today is to protect the God-made man from the man-made giant. The God-made man has natural rights; the corporate giant has no rights except those conferred by the law." Bryan was one of the last major national politicians willing to disestablish the government-corporate connection, but he died in 1925. By the time Carter took it up a half century later, the anti-Washington attitude was purged of any suggestion of institutional change and was defined as administrative adjustments, such as "zero-based budgeting," a minor business-school fad. The fact that such trifles were made so much of testifies to how little was left for the soon-to-be President and his opponent to argue over. In large measure the campaign that saw Carter enter the White House consisted of the two opponents waiting for the other to trip into a slip of the tongue.

If Carter fits too embarrassingly well as the classic example of the bipartisan, nonpartisan problem-solver President, this may be explained by the fact that both he and many others believe that the nation had been rent, torn, divided, and set against itself so deeply that the healer-unifier was an exigent necessity. Some doubt exists that the nation was ever as torn apart and rent as was suggested in the months after Nixon's fall. After all, scarcely 50 percent of the eligible voters participated in either the '68 or the '72 election. Thus one out of two Americans of voting age didn't care enough about the disgraced President to vote for him or against him. Like the divisions over Vietnam, the battle to chase Nixon out of Washington was enjoyed as entertainment more than it was suffered over as "the gravest constitutional crisis since the Civil War," as the television news readers portentously described it. Most Americans, if they gave it much thought at all, took it as good theatre with the most distant connection to their lives.

This was not the case with the ruling classes. Not since Franklin Roosevelt's second term had there been such division among the members of the higher circles as there were in the late 1960s and early 1970s. It was their wounds which needed the ointment and for this a Wheatena man like Carter was most suitable. They needed reuniting, and Carter, the Baptist of richly conventional piety, the member of the Trilateral Commission, Carter the engineer, businessman, and quiet-speaking problem-solver President was acceptable if not desirable.

Election under these circumstances is hardly more than a mandate to be—be nice, be honest, be good, be quiet. The political terms of Carter's ascension were that he confine himself to proposals and initiatives that would not disturb institutional arrangements or long-established practices. This was the reason for the contorted Ptolemaic economics of something like his energy program. He was trying to limit consumption without limiting the industry's traditional marketing prerogatives.

A Democrat who has learned that having his party control Congress avails him little more than it did his Republican predecessors, Carter has been forced into the old pattern of continuing the work and direction of the man he vanquished in 1976. This President lives out his administration in a flat, uneffervescent moment. He has been taxed with breaking a campaign promise here and there, of being a jot clumsy, but mostly he has had to suffer being accused of that all-purpose sin, lack of leadership. But where is he to lead in a time when no one puts forth any strong claim to know where to go? Presidents reflect their times, they do not rise above them. Carter, like his predecessors, must pick up his clues as to what to do from the power circles hedging him in and supporting his office. Lyndon Johnson no more invented the Great Society than Franklin Roosevelt invented the New Deal. They did not even name them. Their gift, and the reason they're given the credit or the blame, is that they were able to see which were the politically and socially potent ideas, the ideas backed by the power configurations, and to go along with them. In the 1920s it was the idea that gave birth to the NRA—of cooperation—that was being talked of in business circles. It is not that Carter is ignoring today's dramatic and necessary ideas. There aren't any.

In the eyes of most, present arrangements are minimally satisfactory if not outright splendid. We may feel vexed by too much government, overtaxed, annoyed, and cheated by one huge institution or another, but on balance people don't think their wishes are unrepresented. They do not cherish a dream of another, different America. Our grandparents dreamed of a bigger, better, a more perfect nation. We have moderated our hopes and dream only of a future that is as good as the past.

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Sen. James Abourezk,
Bella Abzug, Julian Bond, Norman Cousins,
Clay Felker, Milos Forman, Joseph Heller,
Cong. Elizabeth Holtzman, Vernon Jordan,
Jerzy Kosinski, J. Anthony Lukas,
Sen. George McGovern, Joseph Papp,
Sen. William Proxmire, Gail Sheehy,
Tom Wicker **read it.**

Cesar Chavez, Ramsey Clark, Fred Cook,
Harold Cruman, E.L. Doctorow,
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For turn-of-the-century Americans the recognition of the coming end of the frontier was a gloomy metaphysical fact. As we cannot conceive a no-growth economy, they could not imagine a no-growth society. People who otherwise might not have supported the Spanish-American War may have done so out of the conviction that the nation had a spiritual need for expansion. The continent conquered, the Philippines would provide the sense of new space. The frontier, at least as a metaphor for a large and future destiny, remained a popular word until John Kennedy proclaimed a new one and it turned out to be our last. Kennedy's New Frontier wasn't the pushing forward of boundaries but the maintaining of them—guarding the physical extremities of empire, manning the tropical marches to hold back the Red infiltration.

The outer bounds have been established. The future is prologue no more. The past worked before, and it will work again, but beyond the ups and downs and bumpsy-daisies of war and peace and boom and bust, every day everything got a little better because the nation got richer. Our per capita income cannot jump in the next seventy-five years as it did in the last. The central material fact on which our political economy has rested, the rapid and infinite growth in wealth, has changed.

We have not, and this closed universe we have constructed for ourselves makes it excessively hard for us to do so. The formal mechanisms for debate and decision have failed us in the great issues of the post-1945 era, but even in smaller matters the arthritis of politics increasingly forces the courts to try to do what the legislative and executive branches cannot make themselves do. Where every interest is strong enough to veto every other, turning to the judges to rule by fiat has a great appeal but one judge nullifies another and the attempt to use the judiciary to legislate in any broad way fails.

Raise the taxes, cut the taxes, increase the budget deficits, lower them, centralize HEW to increase coordination, decentralize HEW to decrease excessive centralized coordination. Government becomes the choice among a very small number of finite acts or combinations of acts repeated without end. Management or tinkering replaces politics. A society thus petrified and repetitive places itself in peril of becoming as obsolete as the short-lived gadgetry it must manufacture and sell in spite of its own desires to build true and forever.

For that we must replace management with politics. We must understand we can be manipulated as much by false harmonies as we can injure ourselves with the love of discord. Politicize, polarize, ignite the rancors of politics, disunite, crack open the one-party state; no change, no democracy is possible without friction.

The American tautology of politics and economics is not watertight. Wisps of other ideas and values have not been completely voided from the hermetic social sphere. Some of us can still cause trouble, so we can hope that some of us will. □

Jacobites

(Continued from Front Cover)

thought to threaten the continuation of life as we know it in the United States. It explains a long line of New Conservative statements—from Daniel Patrick Moynihan's "human rights" baiting of the Third World in the U.N. General Assembly; through open calls for taking the offensive in the "North-South" world economic conflict, such as Robert W. Tucker's straightforward proposal, in *Commentary*, that the United States invade the Mideast if its oil supplies are threatened (that is, if lesser nations dare to use against us the same kind of economic blackmail that we normally use against them); to the World Soviet menace fantasies of the Committee on the Present Danger and the Coalition for a Democratic Majority, which obviously have more to do with fear that the Soviets will interfere with our attempts to exploit Third World resources than with any conceivably realistic threat to national or West European security (as existed, say, after World War II). Conversely, the New Conservatives' complaisance toward the government of Rhodesia, the world's last exponent of naked colonialism (and a major exporter of chrome), combined with discreet silence about the activities of such "allies" as Brazil, Chile and South Korea (not to mention the slave state of South Africa) make it clear that nothing about world "democracy," which they like to pretend they are defending, but only maintenance of their standard of living, is on their minds. An attitude which in 1946 was still so disreputable that officials who expressed it usually reserved their statements for interoffice memos and private diaries, is flaunted and trumpeted by the New Conservatives as though national selfishness were the highest moral gospel.

But one also finds the same attitude revealed in such matters, trivial by comparison, as the reception accorded John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* in the organs of New Conservatism. *Commentary* and *The Public Interest* somehow transformed the genteel liberal Rawls into a Socialist demon. The metamorphosis ceases to astonish as soon as one discovers what it is about Rawls's work that so bothers his New Conservative critics. It is, first, his insistence on the principle that those who benefit from inequalities should be able to show that their possession of those inequalities also provides an increase in welfare to the worst-off members of society; and second, his interesting and novel notion of a hypothetical "original position" of ignorance about our individual interests, from which (if we were engaged in creating the institutions of a just society) we could choose general principles without at all knowing about whether their adoption would be to our own benefit. Thus what the New Conservatives dislike about Rawls is his belief, apparent in these principles, that "justice is fair-

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ness;" that it involves the attempt we make to *do good* (no escaping the phrase) to others, even at the expense of our own interests. Nothing so offends New Conservatives as that last proviso. A long line of both conservative and liberal moralists, from Dostoyevski to Rawls, has argued that a society can be judged only by how its worst-off members are treated; the *New* Conservatives, in a stunning ethical reversal, judge their own or any society according to how people like themselves are treated. (Podhoretz has written that any society should be judged by how it treats Jews, a principle that sounds plausible until we reflect that, for instance, it puts South Africa on the "approved" list, since Jews aren't especially mistreated there—only blacks and "coloreds.")

But then the Rawls matter is not really trivial, for it turns out that, practically speaking, his philosophy is a justification of "affirmative action" on behalf of minorities that have previously been deprived of equal justice—and no idea is more hated by the New Conservatives than the idea of not just numerical quotas but affirmative action of any kind. Affirmative action as an institution does indeed pose many questions of principle (questions that have been debated at length in such serious academic journals as *Ethics* and *Philosophy and Public Affairs*), but these are not considered for a moment by the New Conservatives. Rarely in the last half dozen years has *Commentary* gone more than a handful of successive issues without publishing a savage attack on affirmative action for blacks, or for women. But what is constant in all those attacks is that none of them has ever dealt with the major philosophical issue that confronts all serious discussants of the issue. That issue is whether "merit" is to be measured only by how we perform as individuals, according to standardized criteria of intellectual success, or whether it might have to do also with the overall benefit our personal advancement may offer to society, especially to its worst-off members. In an entirely self-serving manner the New Conservatives assume without question that "merit" is only the particular constellation of talents possessed by themselves and the class whom they wish to represent (and their children). At home as abroad, "beggar thy neighbor" is their principle of action.

At the beginning of his essay on *Utilitarianism*, John Stuart Mill remarked: "It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied." In the last chapter of that essay, entitled "Of the Connection Between Justice and Utility," he made clear his belief that, by the same token, it is better to be a justice-seeking person dissatisfied than a self-seeking person satisfied. The utilitarian, he argued, can consistently make that judgment because the notion of self-interest includes potentially anything that enlarges oneself—and among those things that will enlarge self *the most* are the satisfactions to be found in

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cooperative, humanly decent relationships with others. In this argument Mill, the classical liberal, showed himself to be at the same time a classical conservative, one who refused to surrender to the narrow-minded, philistine selfishness of modern individualism, even though his utilitarian philosophy might seem at first glance to be the major ideological weapon in the armory of the philistines. The genius of classical conservatism has always been to argue that there can be an overarching common good in which we all share equally, though we are not otherwise equal, and that we ought therefore to search for (nonself-interested) ways to implement it. The metaphysics and the sociology of that assertion are equally questionable, but among the great conservatives the sincerity of belief in, or at least longing for, a world of mutuality, charity and justice is unquestionable. It is the peculiar accomplishment of today's New Conservatives to raise what Mill considered the foolish or piggish version of personal utility to the level of a primary value.

To be sure, these new conservatives pretend to speak for "the real majority." Adopting a populist mode that (coming from intellectuals) would be comical were it not so often expressed with real viciousness, they treat the temporary coincidence of views about certain symbolic issues between themselves and 50 to 60 percent (or so) of Americans as an index of their moral righteousness and devotion to democracy. It is not that, of course.

Morally, the majority view suggests nothing either way (especially when it is supposed to be discovered in the leading, that is to say misleading, questions asked by the public opinion pollsters). Politically, democracy means only that we obey the majority's views as translated into law, not that we refrain either from trying to change those views or from attempting to forestall their implementation if we think they lack fundamental constitutional or procedural fairness. And practically speaking, the only genuine class interest voiced by these pseudo-populist intellectuals is that of the affluent middle class. Their talk of "the real majority" hardly conceals their effusive apologetics for a corporate capitalist system in which the "real" wages of the "real" majority (not themselves) have fallen since 1965, and in which the inevitable oil squeeze from abroad is used to justify the whipping up of war hysteria rather than to attempt the redistribution of power and profit at home. These spokesmen for "the real majority" have not, in fact, produced a single work that is sensitively descriptive of American life, no works like those of Harry Braverman, Studs Terkel, Patricia Cayo Sexton, or Richard Sennett and Jonathan Cobb. They are at home with statistics, never with people. Indeed, so little do they represent a real popular demand that "their" TV series, Ben Wattenberg's "In Search of the Real America," was paid for by Mobil Oil, Bethlehem Steel, AT&T, and tax-exempt foundations dispensing the Olin, Annenberg, Richardson and Scaife fortunes! Almost all American intellectuals are compelled by their circumstance to speak to, rather than for, "the people," but in no other instance is the gap between populist rhetoric and the reality of support so great.

Yet for the New Conservatives, anyone who fails to prostrate himself or herself before the make-believe alliance of *Commentary*, the American Enterprise Institute and a few public opinion polls becomes a New Left "elitist," an enemy of "the people" to be to be scourged from public life like Ibsen's Dr. Stockmann. Again, the resonances of Bobby Seale and Huey Newton ("Power to the People") would be ironically amusing were it not that European history casts a darker shadow on the road down which we can travel in the name of chauvinism, racial enmity and scapegoating the Left.

The present task, therefore, is to demonstrate that the class selfishness of the New Conservatives is just that—mere selfishness. Since there are millions of Americans who really do share the same self-interests, there are bound to be millions who respond to their appeal. The real danger, though, is that, with the immense resources put at their disposal by the corporate sector, they will be able to monopolize or manipulate the political universe of millions of others to whom they offer nothing, but who are made vulnerable to their appeal by genuine fears and needs that go otherwise unattended. The New Conservatives can be prevented from implementing their travesty of a social philosophy only if the Left finds better ways to meet such fears and needs. □

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PROGRESS, ANTI-CLASSICAL

Dictions of the Slaves of Liberations

(for Philipp and Raina Fehl: "to purify," as Mallarmé said, "the diction of our tribe.")

Not overdue liberations but prostituted jargons are the target: in this outburst of an anti-plutocratic classical humanist. "Et c'est assez pour le poète" (St.-John Perse, 1960) "d'être la mauvaise conscience de son temps."

I. RECYCLING THE ANCIENTS

'Nous avons change tout cela,'—fake healer in Molière's *Médecin.*

We've cured those misfits. Helen elopes today
With her . . . marriage counselor; Bacchus with A.A.

Freud we reverse in our pop-guru therapy:
Where ego was, there id shall be.

Om! And om yum! We id-lib shrinks,
Updating mythology with puns of id-eology, make kingdoms of kinks.

Whitewash babe-roasting Atreus; he merely observed
Our motto: "Youth will be served."

Cackling, "Polly-morph wants a perverse Cracker,"
Oedipus makes it as mom's Redneck hijacker.

Likewise the minotaur is no longer bad news;
A thesis needs (we're into the dialectic) an anti-Theseus.

Far-out has more clout than some gray Golden Mean.
Praise Procrustes: far-left *and* far-right clone his gene;

"Conservative" kooks our Kook's Tour also books;
Hear their id run amok, preaching anti-id shlock;—

"Anita, Anita, fly your broomstick fleeter, to nab Ganymede's illegal
Eagle."

II. ONE KIND OF FEM-LIB

Achtung! Zeus landing! To sing swan-songs in "Aïda"?
No, that macho duckling is quacking, "Take me to your Leda."

Blame Zeus (I mean Freud—no, Mailer) for inventing babies;
It's a plot by patriarch rabbis—I mean patriarch rabies;

Yup, wombs are an inside plot against multiple click-lib.
All biology's a fib.

Clyt-emnestra? She's, like, supportive as a role model
On account of she coped (tub's ready, hubby) without passive twaddle.

The Furies? They're Graces, whose right to Fulfillment was spurned;
Hell hath no woman like a Fury scorned.

Paranoia Lost, Paranoia Regained—let the ideas be manic
So long as the yogurt's organic.

Who's afraid of Virginia Dentata? Voice our woe, Alcott's Jo;
Let it all hang out, *Little Women*, you were always *The Story of O.*

III. GALLANT ACTIVISTS OF NEWER LEFTS

Now that Moscow's a turkey and Vietnam a bore,
Our rave is Cambodia's dreamers and the gung-ho Gang of Four.

We taught Moro—and his biggies in Essen—
A lesson.

DEFINITIONS: Amin's critics are "racist," but to blow up a Zionist
Child isn't race, it's "anti-imperialist".

ITALICS: workers, poor slobs, *like* the consumer society;
Holding our nose, we'll *make* them free.

What storms heaven? Not stinky majorities but Promethean panache!
(Mums, send me Nechaev, my skis, and more cash.)

The Snigger of the Narcissus inside us altruists
Crooks the little finger of our clenched fists.

We've such beautiful futures, all our ids become fads.
(O why does cryptic Cassandra keep gibbering, "Terminal cads"?)

IV. SOUTHERN CAL, YES; ATHENS, NO

Classical, no; classy Cal, yes. Here 2 plus 2 are
An upwardly mobile 5, not an (ugh) Squaresville 4.

It's messiah time when "Apocalypse" means a flying-saucer Beast
And "Apostle" means gospeling ESP, EST, and yeast;

We're ascetics in hairshirts (lined with mink),
Hemophiliacs of the heart (bleeding only red ink),

And the poor man's St. Francis (while in-between
We relate meaningfully to—er—something 13).

Tone-deaf, we've missed (where's the satirist, to flay a parvenu flaw?)
Ancestral voices prophesying Waugh.

Go *ad lib.* on ad-libbing all id-lib libidos;
What's mere 3,000 years of "restrain thyself" credos?

For lynch-lib, we've grandstands: Weatherman's or Klansman's.
In my father's house are many Mansons.

Prospero, no; Caliban, yes. What's our Kali-banality binge
But the dead counterculture's (we're co-option's vultures) revenge?

V. THE HERD OF INDEPENDENT MINDS

While words decay and mind's ecology wanes,
We whoop it up for the whooping cranes.

Why can't you, you zombie of work-ethic spells,
Be a nonconformist like everybody else?

Here's the thrust of the bottom-line of our bandwagon:
We don't go for jargon.

We suffer our alienation creatively
By writing spoofs of boob-tubes . . . for TV.

Because a spontaneous lifestyle is where
It's at, we're at mirrors . . . to make sure we've mussed hair.

Dump even the metrics of classics. Poetrywise we bless
The artlessness that conceals artlessness.

We rigidly opt to resist rigid forms;
Hopefully the Now generation is disinterested in norms.

But help!—what sea-spray is drenching our all-lib parade?
It's unpornosapphic Venus, calling a spayed a spayed.

Peter Viereck is a history professor at Mt. Holyoke, as well as Pulitzer Prize-winning poet. As the only Harvard student receiving both its Garrison Prize for poetry and its Bowdoin Prize for prose, he has published equally in both genres. His dozen books include The Unadjusted Man *and* Conservatism from John Adams to Churchill *in prose;* Terror & Decorum *and* The Tree Witch *in poetry, all currently reprinted by Greenwood Press, Westport, Conn., as is his 1949 book* Conservatism Revisited, *a much-denounced turning point in political philosophy, being the very first book of the "New Conservative" movement. An anti-Communist, he broke with much of the movement he founded: on the ethical issue of whether Joseph McCarthy was a conservative good guy (as the* National Review *then believed) or a rightist radical and lying neo-Populist demagogue, as Prof. Viereck argued. "Progress, Anti-Classical" is from his unpublished poetry book,* Applewood.

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

Fighting for the Right

ALAN CRAWFORD

THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS AND OTHER SOBERING THOUGHTS. *By George F. Will. Harper & Row. 333 pp. $10.95.*

It is with no small discomfort that I find myself in disagreement with my fellow right-wingers at the weekly *Human Events*, who some time ago took the old muzzleloader off the cabin wall and—yeehaw!—sent a few rounds screeching in the general direction of George F. Will. This city slicker in the backwoods of the contemporary American Right was guilty of a number of capital crimes, my friends felt, not the least of which was impersonating a conservative and, therefore, illegal trespass. Not only had he dared differ with Ronald Reagan's belief that the federal government "is imposing itself" on a reluctant electorate, he also "savaged" the near-septuagenarian ex-Governor because (in Will's words) "around the neck and mouth he looks like an old man."

Still worse, the former columnist for William F. Buckley, Jr.'s *National Review* actually exhibited signs of relief when Justice caught up with the bounder Agnew and "even condemned his political views." This fact suggests, among other things, that Will—perhaps alone among conservative commentators—bothered to find out something about those views, and that his right-wing critics suffer from an insufficient sense of the past: the American Conservative Union, after all, surveyed the governors in 1966 and ranked the Baltimore County bunko artist among the ten most "liberal," cheek-by-jowl with Romney and Rockefeller. "But Will's ignorance is not at issue," *Human Events* concluded, "What is at issue is the claim that he is some authentic conservative spokesman. He just isn't."

To such charges Will pleads *nolo contendere*. "I cheerfully concede what some *soi-disant* conservatives charge," he writes in the Introduction to this collection of columns which won him a Pulitzer Prize. "My conservatism is not theirs."

Theirs, he suggests, is not conservatism at all. It is, instead, "a radically anti-political ideology, decayed Jeffersonianism characterized by a frivolous hostility toward the state, and lacking the traditional conservative appreciation of the dignity of the political vocation and the grandeur of its responsibilities."

They don't gabble much about grandeur in Pat Buchananland, but they talk a great deal about Big Government and Will takes issue with them there, too. These self-styled conservatives, he notes, assume that "a large government such as ours is an *inherently* liberal device, *inherently* hostile to conservative values. But this is true only if freedom is the only conservative value, and if freedom means only the absence of restraints applied by government. And if that is what conservatism asserts, it is a stone-cold anachronism, as dead as the 19th-century liberalism it resembles. It is a political philosophy irrelevant to the government that has evolved in response to Americans' desires."

True conservatives, Will observes in an essay on Gerald Ford's loss of the White House, "distrust and try to modulate social forces that work against the conservation of traditional values. But for a century the dominant conservatism has uncritically worshipped the most transforming force, the dynamism of the American economy. No coherent conservatism can be based solely on commercialism but this conservatism has been consistently ardent only about economic growth, and hence economies of scale, and social mobility. These take a severe toll against small towns, small enterprises, family farms, local governments, craftsmanship, environmental values, a sense of community and other aspects of humane living. "Against everything, that is, American conservatives say they want to conserve."

Yet by championing free enterprise—"institutionalized restlessness, an engine of perpetual change"—they have unwittingly joined forces with Naderite liberals to encourage the notion that "citizens should be regarded, primarily, as consumers," with public policy expected to "serve consumption." The only apparent goal of this kind of conservatism, Will notes, "is to increase the individuals' disposable income."

If that is true, one need only note what Daniel Bell called the movement from "the Protestant ethic to the psychedelic bazaar" to see that conservatism, so defined, has won the day. The much-reviled "Me Decade," after all, is nothing more than the Pepsi Generation in suspended adolescence: ads for Johnnie Walker Scotch implore, biblically, "Honor Thy Self," and many Americans now "think happiness is a Buick Electra."

The result, in politics, is "an anarchy of self-interestedness" which may have reached its low in the much-touted tax revolt we are told marks a new conservatism among American voters. Anticipating Proposition 13, Will believes this "might better be called infantilism."

> Those of us blessed with small children recognize childishness when we see it. Increasingly the nation, like a child, wills the end without willing the means to the end. The end is a full platter of government services. The means to that end is the energetic government that does the inevitable regulating and taxing. Today's "conservatism"? The average voter has looked into his heart of hearts, prayed long and hard, and come to the conclusion that it is high time the government cut his *neighbor's* benefits.

Can there be any question? Will's knowledge that American capitalism has been a mixed blessing and his rejection of the pirated notion that the government is best which governs least establishes, beyond dispute, that his conservatism is not that of Sen. Jesse Helms and the crowd that would abolish welfare.

But it *is* conservatism and, if it lacks the bullish bat of Senator Helms in its lineup, it does have some heavy hitters on the bench. Will's conservatism is that of Disraeli and Eliot and Coleridge and Churchill and Henry Adams. It is, above all, the conservatism of the seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, the great social reformer of Victorian England.

> Shaftesbury was one of those Tories—the young Disraeli was another—who were early and vigorous in fighting, for impeccable, conservative reasons, the rawest abuses of the early industrial system. He understood that conservatism is about the conservation of certain values and these values have social prerequisites. He believed that nothing is more subversive of a nation than the existence of a permanent underclass, blocked from upward mobility, and brutalized by conditions destructive of institutions like the family and values like gentleness and lawfulness that are, conservatives know, mainstays of civilization.

Alan Crawford, a contributor to Human Events, National Review *and* The Nation *has worked on the staffs of* New Guard, Conservative Digest *and* The Washington Post.

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That Shaftesbury was a conservative, Will writes in his superb review of Georgina Battiscombe's biography, "gives his luminous career a special interest to those of us who are interested in broadening and deepening the somewhat narrow and negative social prescriptions of American conservatism."

That understood, Will gains a credibility often lacking in his conservative brethren when, for instance, he writes about the toll of inflation or bureaucratic arrogance or the inability of public institutions to meet the needs of our urban poor. His words carry a special clout, too, when he writes with quiet outrage of his visit to Anne Frank's "Secret Annex" at 263 Prinsengracht, Amsterdam, or of Shirley MacLaine's "hyperventilating" over Red China's "totalitarian benevolence" or the "sentimental nonsense" that tells us Italian Communists are somehow "different."

It ought not be a crime to restore such moral intelligence to American conservatism and it is disheartening to see my conservative friends open fire on those who try. They might better understand George Will, I respectfully submit, if they took more seriously the rich variety of the conservative tradition they presume to uphold—and then put the old blunderbuss back on the cabin wall. □

White on White

JAMES CHACE

IN SEARCH OF HISTORY: A Personal Memoir. *By Theodore H. White. Harper & Row. 561 pp. $12.95.*

"America Was Promises"—Archibald MacLeish's evocation of an America where "promises are theirs who take them"—could well serve as the appropriate subtitle for Theodore H. White's autobiographical memoir. As White explains it, he was preparing once again to write down the odyssey of another Presidential election, that of Jimmy Carter, when he realized that something had gone wrong. He was no longer stirred to write reportage. His return to his childhood home in Boston revealed to him the blighted urban landscape of a ruined city. Obviously, the promises America offered had not been fulfilled, and so White decided to abandon the role of reporter and tried to make sense out of all he had seen and reported over the past thirty years. While he fails to uncover the deep, underlying causes of what went wrong with his assumption that American history had largely been driven by "American Goodness and Virtue," he reveals a good deal about himself as emblematic of a life that witnessed the fulfillment as well as the betrayal of this American dream.

The theme is power—how America got it and how, in particular, America used it. The American Century, as his one-time employer Henry Luce termed it, may have truly begun during World War II when FDR asserted America's global role, a role which every President since then has tried to fill. America's rise to pre-eminent power, however, started with Roosevelt's early promise that the only thing to fear was fear itself. You could continue to rise from poverty and seek a new world by true grit, and even the Great Depression would be an interlude in this quest for fame, fortune and identity, which, for white immigrants, seemed the fulfillment of their struggle to escape the dark realities of the Old World.

Some of the best writing in this highly readable book comes in White's evocation of his childhood—the poor Jewish boy who sold newspapers and got a scholarship to Harvard where he did brilliantly and was justly rewarded with a traveling fellowship. Because he had studied Chinese as an undergraduate, White left for Asia in 1938. It was an experience which would make him a renowned journalist, and quite fortuitously it took place on the very continent on which America most fully played out her drama of victory and betrayal.

For White, history belongs to heroes. Those darker historical forces of social and economic change are scanted in his emphasis on personality and power. It is tempting to dismiss this emphasis on the role of the hero/villain in shaping history as a superficial method for understanding our times and yet a more fruitful approach would look at the ways in which White's experience shaped his view of recent history. Moreover, although the larger historical patterns are obscured by the spotlight on personality—and White is masterful at portraiture—the fact is that historical forces are changed by commanding figures possessed of commanding ideas.

By now the China story is familiar: the unwillingness of FDR and his advisers to heed the advice of the China hands in the State Department not to place all bets on the Chinese Nationalists; Washington's inability to perceive the actual nature of the Chinese civil war, which led to an estrangement between the United States and Communist China that might well have been avoided. White, who observed both the Nationalists and the Communists closely during World War II, believes that Chou En-lai and Mao Tse-tung honestly looked to the United States as an alternative to dependency on Moscow. And in reading the history of missed opportunities, the dismissal of General Stilwell because of his differences with Chiang and then Roosevelt's own disenchantment with Chiang, it is hard not to agree with White when he writes: "The Chinese Communists were preparing to offer a full, perhaps permanent alliance, to the United States—military, economic, political—which they hoped . . . would endure into the future. Had that mood . . . continued, there might have been no Korean War, no Vietnam War."

In Asia, unlike Europe, China was not a potential rival of the United States: the Chinese Communist Party had a long history of differences with Moscow. Was it therefore due to the influence of Roosevelt's emissary to the Communists and Nationalist Chinese, Patrick J. Hurley, that Washington rebuffed Mao's approaches? The answer must surely lie deeper than that, and White should have tried to connect the links between the Hurley mission and the final, ill-fated Marshall mission under Truman to piece out the reasons for the final break between Washington and the Communist Chi-

James Chace is managing editor of Foreign Affairs *and author of* A World Elsewhere.

THE WHALE POEM

I am a swimming forest;
each rib in me
a harp
no wind will hurt
into music.

Make your claim, Eve,
make it.
For garden I depend
not on your god,
not on the hand

of lightning, harsh
scripture of the harpoon.
This planet is blue.
I do not ask
to be forgiven.

Mekeel McBride

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nese. It is not enough to say that Hurley's presence at Communist Chinese headquarters to begin American negotiations was "a classic instance of the derailment of history by accident." Yet White's portrait of Hurley and his account of the tragic-comic aspects of his mission are useful antidotes to those who persist in viewing the postwar history of U.S.-Asian relations as determined, above all, by economic considerations and an American desire for a global imperium.

In U.S. relations with China, the errors are clear and the villains are easily identified. But when White's career leads him to Europe, after breaking with Luce over disagreements on China coverage, there are only heroes. The Marshall Plan seems to White a triumph of American ingenuity and goodness. But the story is more complex than he lets on. In negotiating the postwar British loan, the U.S. Government was not simply the generous donor White often makes it out to be, and to say that by the spring of 1948 "Americans had good reason to be exasperated with Europe" is to skew the story of how U.S. postwar monetary policy evolved. As White describes it, the United States had "given in a single grant in 1946 no less than three and three-quarter billion dollars to the British." The fact is that what he calls a grant was a loan and the terms were not easy ones. Washington, fearing the closure of British markets to the United States, demanded an end to imperial preference and a return to full convertibility of the pound sterling a year after the loan. While these conditions were not designed to break Britain as a world power, they were intended to reduce Britain as a potential commercial rival, largely because the American Government incorrectly perceived the power of Great Britain. What happened, of course, was the collapse of the pound when convertibility was prematurely restored under the conditions of the loan. "Then," as White puts it, "to prevent monetary catastrophe, the British had broken their promise to the Americans, suspended convertibility, and waited to see what the Marshall Plan might offer in relief."

None of the explanations White provides for the British collapse deal with the negotiations that preceded this collapse and, it could be argued, contributed to it. While White is fully aware that subsequent U.S. aid to Europe was not an altruistic act, he oversimplifies the story and makes little or no reference to U.S. hegemony in economic affairs. To confront headon the postwar American thrust for predominance, however, does not mean denigrating an act of enlightened self-interest such as the Marshall Plan. Though White realizes this, he gives little weight to the forces in Treasury and State that gravely affected U.S. economic relations prior to the full onset of the cold war in 1947.

After reporting on European affairs, White came home in the 1950s and found himself tarred by McCarthyism when he defended foreign service officer John Paton Davies who had been with him in Chungking during the war. Denied a passport, White finally managed to clear himself, but the cost was high: "From 1954 to 1972, I never wrote another article about the China I knew so well; and only four articles on Vietnam. . . . A self-censorship, imposed not by government but by prudence, circumscribed me—as it circumscribed countless others." If he had acted otherwise, would he have made a difference? In particular, had someone of White's caliber, who knew Asia, written extensively on Vietnam, would this have awakened America to the error of her ways? Probably not—but it remains a loss that White did not report on Vietnam, for what he knew about Asia was unequaled by any other journalist. He might have made some small difference. It is, nonetheless, to his credit that he can now write: "I deliberately ignored the dynamics of foreign policy and defense because too much danger lurked there; and for that shirking I am now ashamed."

White's last hero was John F. Kennedy. For White, as for so many others, Kennedy was a man who also believed that America was promises. In assessing Kennedy's record, White places a good deal of stress on what Kennedy intended to accomplish. White believes that Kennedy did not mean to continue his expansion of the war in Vietnam, that he would have withdrawn American forces after the 1964 election. And how was this to be done? According to Kenneth O'Donnell, who knew Kennedy better than most, Kennedy offered this explanation: "Put a government in there that will ask us to leave." White does not examine the implications of this quote—but even if not taken at face value, it says much about the assumptions of American power; it also seems wishful thinking.

The memoir ends with White stating that "the good that Americans increasingly sought would encase itself in an absolutism of spirit that led from self-righteousness to brutality." The promises, in short, had not been fulfilled. To understand why, Theodore White will

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most likely write another book, one, as he describes it, that "would be about how men reach for power, which means politics." I hope he does write it—for what White reveals of himself is as valuable a testament of his times as what he reveals of others. □

Riding the Perfect Wave

MICHAEL W. DOYLE

GETTING FROM HERE TO THERE: America's Future in the World Economy. *By W.W. Rostow. McGraw-Hill. 271 pp. $14.95.*

The American reading public has become accustomed to two genres of economic prognostication. One, the Cassandra, extrapolates expected rates of supply, demand and states of technology and soon arrives at crushing "limits to growth." Population overwhelming food, pollution poisoning the atmosphere, industrial heat boiling the oceans are the specters that stalk the extravagant outer limits of these projections. The other, the Pollyanna, envisions a future in which every manner of hypothetical invention will have been implemented. Projections to 2176, such as that by Herman Kahn, anticipate global populations of 15 billion, per capita products of $20,000 and "economies" geared to "quarternary" activities—leisure, hunting, fishing, exotic cults, culture, tourism and gourmet cooking.

W.W. Rostow's vision of the future fits within the optimistic camp. By the year 2000 he expects a doubling of the real income of the developing nations, a global shift to renewable or infinite energy, the control of pollution, the decline of population growth rates, and the surmounting of raw material shortages. However, the focus of his work is interestingly different from that of either of the two dominant prognostications. He has attempted more than an extrapolation of the present, more than an expatiation of the future perfect. He has attempted to show how we can go about getting from here to there. His answer lies in riding the waves—specifically, guiding America along the next, the Fifth, Kondratieff Upswing.

In drawing upon the ideas of Kondratieff, Rostow continues a line of thought that has preoccupied him throughout his career and that is at fundamental variance with both the predominant Keynesian and Monetarist economics of postwar America. Nicolai Kondratieff, a Russian economist writing in the 1920s, argued that the world capitalist economy—both prices and production—fluctuated along a wave of forty to sixty years' duration which underlay shorter business cycle fluctuations. He suggested that the cycles reflected the duration of the life span of durable capital goods (railroads, etc.), but he never fully accounted for the dynamics of the cycle. His researches were cut short by the Kremlin (for where did the "deepening crisis of capitalism" fit into his unending cycles?) and he was transported to Siberia.

Although Rostow found Kondratieff—an economist martyr—a more convenient patron saint to invoke than Trotsky—a Communist martyr—he formally abandoned all but one of Kondratieff's cyclic fluctuations. He argued that only relative raw material prices cyclically fluctuated. They responded to, first, excess demand; then, following responsive investment (in coal mines, plantations, etc.), excess supply. Historical upswings and downswings corresponded with Kondratieff's dates and Rostow continued the cycle with 1920-33 (the Third Downswing); 1933-54 (Fourth Upswing); 1954-72 (Fourth Downswing), and 1972 (Fifth Upswing). Yet he also slips in, as a confusing aside, that somehow general inflation, a rise in interest rates, and decrease in real wages accompany the upswing; their opposites, the downswing.

What Rostow shares with Kondratieff and what distinguishes them both from contemporary, mainstream economics is a focus on the long-run supply of commodities rather than on Keynesian demand or Friedmanite money. Where Keynesians hold that in the long run we are all dead and that adequate demand supported by the state will engender supply, Rostow notes that human beings do live beyond the economists' short run and that persistent stagflation will accompany attempts to stimulate real growth when wages and raw material prices can be pushed up without consideration of demand and while productivity increases are in decline. His solution to transforming problems of the Fifth Upswing into a boom lies in planning by the government directed at increasing the real supply of raw materials and reducing their price.

Surveying the problem sectors of the Fifth Upswing, Rostow steers a middle course between the pessimists and the

Michael Doyle is a political scientist who teaches at Princeton University.

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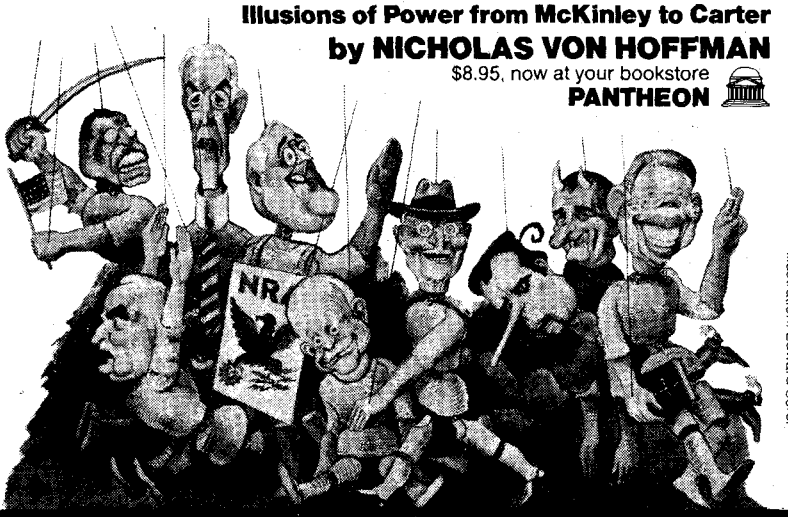

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WOODCARVING

For all I know it's gone now—
torn down or blown down.
If ever I need it
I shall have to build it myself
log by log, pressing in the mud with my own fingers.
On an airy knob swept clean of mists—
that's where it stood
as we drove by on our way up the mountain.
What made me so sure I'd live there—
a woman who knew how to whistle flame out of sticks
and make a phoebe sing
by putting a knife to wood?

Now there's even more to build.
There's the shape of father's hands
as they fold the curly lines
map makers mean for the Blue Mountains of Virginia.
There's mother's hair blowing
into my face as I lean forward from the back seat.
There's myself
catching sight of the rocks in the garden
and the golden rod
high as the windows. And there's the rearview mirror
showing long after we've passed
the one room shack and the woman waving from the door.

Susan Mitchell

optimists. He finds looming scarcities and waiting opportunities. Global population and food need to be rebalanced. This calls for efforts at birth control and the doubling of agricultural output in the less developed countries through a "modernization of rural life." Energy shortages call for an all-out drive for increased production, enlisting the breeder reactor and coal (solar and fusion being long-run hopes), as well as incentives to increased oil exploration and pumping (combined with an excess profits tax to mitigate windfall gains). To enlarge the supply of industrial raw materials, he suggests stockpiles, recycling and increased international investment, backed by treaty guarantees, in the less developed countries.

Rostow realizes that the market mechanism operating on its own is unlikely to be able to effect the needed responses to the Fifth Upswing. The scale of many of the activities is too large; the interests of the actors too disparate; the returns impossible to capture privately. He calls for the state to step in to rescue American capitalism's supply side as the New Deal rescued finance and World War II did demand. Rescuing supply calls for sectoral planning conducted by a small planning staff having the ear of the President, guided by a specific doctrine (this book?), directed by "a person of obvious distinction." Monnet's success in planning the postwar reconstruction of France is being evoked. Setting sectoral targets, stimulating private industry where possible, and supplementing private activity with a national energy bank and regional development banks (a revival of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation and a domestic version, it appears, of the World Bank/regional bank experience), this little staff and its heroic director would guide the Washington bureaucracy and the American economy up and over the next wave of the Kondratieff cycle.

His planning constitutes a plea for an awareness of consequences and for a program reflecting the correct priorities; however, neither W.W. Rostow in this book nor the wave of the Fifth Upswing tells us what we need to know about either priorities or consequences.

Although many question the merits of the breeder reactor, few would dispute the need for cheaper and more reliable sources of energy. However, other raw materials have not been as scarce or as expensive. There is a glut of food, yet prices do not fall; millions, globally, starve. More importantly, raw material price planning holds little promise of addressing the deeper problems of the American economy: employment, inflation and productivity. These are only partly related to the raw material upswing. Rostow, among others, has criticized Kondratieff's general theory of the cycle—for its inclusion of prices, production, investment, growth rates—in one overall system. He can hardly turn around and employ his single-sector (raw material prices) version to guide the U.S. economy out of its multi-sectoral doldrums. Without such a doctrine, planning takes on the analytical significance of an exhortation to be prudent—unobjectionable, but uninformative.

Moreover, his call for coherent sectoral planning in a still liberal capitalist economy has all the significant effect of an exhortation to sobriety in a bar or continence in a bordello. The Republicans declared moral war on the oil deficit; the President and Congress have engaged in a *sitzkrieg*—neither has been willing alone to pay the political costs of raising energy prices. The private economy now faces a standoff where (in the phrase of a colleague, James Kurth) both labor and capital are capable of turning their costs (profits and wages) into fixed costs paid by the economy as a whole through inflation. Thus institutional changes are necessary that make profits and wages again concordant with real growth by making profits and wages dependent on the growth of the individual firm.

A number of institutional arrangements could achieve this result. A conservative alliance might achieve it by reducing social welfare expenditures, raising energy costs, less progressive taxation, concerted government injunctions against strikes and increased exports and investments to the Third World. Inflation would be contained by unemployment; productivity stimulated by investments based on higher profits and the ability to lay off lower-productivity workers; and equality would be sacrificed to the economic license of the few. A revolutionary takeover might construct an economic system wherein capital would bear the costs of adjustment by state production and regulated prices. Liberty would be put at risk to insure a livelihood for all. Lastly, perhaps a liberal democratic alliance could attempt to match wages and corporate returns to productivity by internalizing productive gains and losses in privately socialized industries beginning with those industries that call for governmental aid. A Yugoslav path funded by Rostow's development bank for *these* industries might restore productivity by the production-linked wages and profit shares in these lagging sectors and create a better conjunction of liberty and equality. But again none of these are feasible without either a repressive state or, in

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the third case, a coherently mobilized majority such as those that sustained the Second New Deal and the Great Society.

Rostow, detailing the dilemmas of mere demand management, has pointed out the need to be concerned with the longer term evolution of the economy and the role government will need to play in it. But a Kondratieff Wave cannot provide a doctrine to guide that transformation; it is neither determinant nor general enough to encompass the scope of the present malaise nor evocative enough to mobilize concerted governmental and public commitment. Rostow is waiting for his wave to ride to a safe shore, when in fact we are on the proverbial storm-tossed sea far from sight of land. A direction must be *chosen*—no wave will carry us; and a doctrine must be developed that addresses the fundamental problems of the economy and looks toward a future portrayed in terms of basic civic values, not dubious cyclic fluctuations. □

THEATRE

HAROLD CLURMAN

Some years ago in Bucharest I saw a most remarkable production of *Danton's Death*. Later, on the same visit, I was invited to a fascinating performance of Diderot's philosophic dialogue *Rameau's Nephew*. The director in both instances was Liviu Ciulei. I recognized a high-ranking talent. It is with great regret, therefore, that I must report disappointment at two of his most recent American displays: Wedekind's *Spring Awakening* and Gogol's *The Inspector General* (Circle in the Square).

I chose not to review the first of these two plays because it was given at The Juilliard School of Drama and I did not wish to discourage its student cast. The players were certainly promising enough; what displeased me on the occasion was hardly their fault. The press was almost unanimously enthusiastic and I should add understandably so. The play is a masterpiece of its time (1891); the production was indisputably "original."

I had seen *Spring Awakening* twice in German and several times in English. The first of the German productions was Max Reinhardt's and I still remember it vividly. It was poignant, it was sensuous, and it was rippingly funny where it should be. I did not expect the Juilliard performance (I saw it again at the Public Theatre) to be anything like Reinhardt's but I was shocked that it left me indifferent, not to say cold. I do not now intend to review it in any detail, but its shortcomings are in general those I find aggravated in *The Inspector General*. They require discussion not only in themselves but for what I deem aesthetic distortions in certain contemporary theatre practices.

Ever since the publication of Gordon Craig's *On the Art of the Theatre* (1911), the more adventurous artists have stressed the purely theatrical aspects of dramatic presentation. Realism, they held, had deprived the theatre of its independence as an art, turning it into a mere adjunct of literature. The new *esthetique* called for movement, scenic color (decor, lighting, etc.) and interpretation freed from the restriction of a literal illustration of texts.

A consequence of this change of mode was the elevation of the director to the kingpin of the theatrical event or "author" of the staged play. It was not so much Shakespeare, Moliere, or Schiller the audience came to see, but a particular director's vision of them. Advances in the new approach were first, and most conspicuously, effected in Russia and Germany and made famous by such men as Reinhardt (around 1911), Meyerhold (in 1913) and Vachtangov (in 1918). The movement spread and is now very nearly domi-

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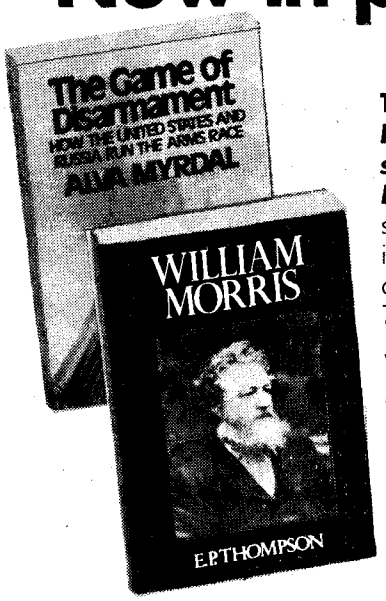

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nant in most of Europe and causing quite a stir in the United States, especially Off-Broadway and in the regional theatres.

Without question the so-called "new theatre" has enlivened the stage. (It certainly weighs heavily in its vocabulary and rhetoric with such terms as "presentational" versus "representational," "expressionism," "constructionism," "epic," "environmental," etc., etc.) All this, I repeat, may be to the good or at least useful. But the quest for novelty has addled the minds not only of many critics and spectators but of certain directors as well. What has been lost sight of is the Craigian concept of unity of matter and form. The Play—and I do not mean the script as literature but the total Play as dramatic statement—has been all but entirely eliminated or trivialized. *Revisor* (*The Inspector General*), a cause of public consternation in 1836, was first produced in Meyerhold's version in Moscow in 1926; that was the version I saw in 1934 and again in 1935. Meyerhold, as usual, took great liberties with the text, but its spirit was closer to Gogol than the literal Russian production I later saw in New York with the great Michael Chekhov in the central role. Meyerhold's production, in fact, was one of the very few works of genius I have ever seen in more than sixty years of playgoing here or abroad.

My preamble should make it clear that I have no objection—on the contrary—to untraditional treatment of masterpieces. It should be noticed, however, that most theatrical "modernism" has been applied to old and familiar plays, so that audiences may readily recognize what has been "done" to them. Meyerhold, on the other hand, has staged many new Soviet plays in a style that was nearly always dramatically potent, and Brecht's originality as a director was the equivalent of his dramaturgy: they constituted a unified whole.

Ciulei's *Spring Awakening* and his *The Inspector General* might pass as brilliant. But, with all respect for sporadic inventiveness, they are bad. They are bad because they more or less nullify the material they employ. What chiefly arrested my attention in his *Spring Awakening* was only *technique*. The stylized scene of the professors' conference, besides being perforce atrociously miscast, was not half as hilarious or satirically sharp as Reinhardt's "straight" rendering, nor was the markedly routined scene of the bourgeois husband and wife in their bedroom much more than a cartoon. The company, young though it was, might have been more effective if it had not been so rigorously directed. The device of playing much of the action behind a metal "cage" occupying the larger part of the stage area—to denote the constriction of middle-class existence, while the narrow forestage outside the cage is presumed to signify the adolescent sphere of freedom—is like most such catchy ideas more convincing in telling and writing about than it is in seeing.

The Inspector General is gesturally and vocally strenuous (all *forte*) without being funny (except for such moments as the appearance of the maidservant [Renee Lippin] who chatters a rapid-fire flow of gibberish. The result is not comedy but a kind of loutish burlesque. There are gags galore but they are performed with a perspiring, repetitious and tiresome energy. Everything is physicalized and visualized, which may be correct in principle but is heavy-handed in execution. When you play for laughs, Gogol and hundreds of others have said, you seldom get them.

Gogol's play is somewhat like Dickens: grotesquely true, charming and biting. Like all plays and novels about corruption in official circles, it is socially apposite at all times. There is in *The Inspector General* something pure and innocent (a characteristic of most Russian art), even when heartbreaking and fierce. Those qualities are almost totally absent in the present overly elaborate production. The Russian saying, "Don't blame the mirror if your mug is crooked," suits the occasion.

There are some good actors in the cast, but few of them appear to advantage because—and this is disastrous with American actors—Ciulei does not allow them to be even a little bit themselves; they are bound in a

FROM THIS ANGLE

From this angle, you look older and pearled,
captive of light that outlines like ice
sheathing a tree. Ruthlessly delicate,
it edges you like snow settling on a twig,
crystal by crystal.

Though this is not the city
he never left, Vermeer would recognize
the light, and you holding a letter to it,
a patch of sun pushing your hairline back.
For two hours on a good day the light was his
to arrange certain things in: map, heavy
blue chairs, clay jug and, implied beyond this,
the leaded window, the challenge of the familiar.

For two hours we've heard trees
breaking their clear shells, scattering shards
on the crusted snow. Across the street
an old woman beats a sapling with a broom.
You refold the letter in your precise way
and we laugh, as if it were funny,
about what my mother forgets she's told us.
You rub your face as if rehearsing age.

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straitjacket of his restrictive cleverness. He, rather than the actors, seems to be playing all the parts. Max Wright, "the inspector," is monotonous and altogether without the naivete of the character. Kenneth Welsh is winning as the postmaster. There is wit in Bob Balaban's somewhat too ancient servant, Ossip. And because he is "understylized" and nakedly honest, Theodore Bikel as the mayor seems strangely out of place—like a real tree among painted ones.

Eubie, a sort of nightclub show of the 1920s and 1930s is based on the tunes of the 95-year-old Eubie Blake (who wrote *Shuffle Along*, *I'm Just Wild About Harry* and *Blackbirds of 1930*). It is fun (Ambassador Theatre).

I enjoyed its zest, the extraordinary dancing and singing of Gregory Hines and his brother Maurice, the Broadway brio, the lyrical legs, the good female voices, the glad faces. An ordinary theatre is perhaps not a fit setting for such a jamboree—dropping the two-part format and a few drinks might make the evening seem less extended. But for what it aims to do, the show does well: it is a rattling, lively entertainment. □

ART

LAWRENCE ALLOWAY

Last fall Mary Miss began work on a 4-acre field at the Nassau County Museum of Fine Arts. One year later her sculpture is finished and opened officially on October 1. It is an outstanding piece of environmental sculpture, constructed specifically for the site. That is, it does not merely occupy the area, as would a big pre-existing sculpture but shapes the landscape for which it was conceived as it is shaped by it. Former director Ward Mintz and former curator Jean Feinberg saw the possibility of using the extensive grounds of the former Frick mansion for such projects. As a rule, ambitious environmental works are off the beaten track or fleeting. The museum context gives this work greater consultability and longer life.

Mary Miss has built a sequential work with five pieces in three types of structure. There are three towers, an earth mound, and an underground structure. No single viewing place gives a total impression: to incorporate successive points of view, walking is essential. On a rise in the ground, more or less at eye level, you can see the top of a ladder. It invites you forward, to walk up the slope toward it, and it turns out to project from an absolutely precise square hole, measuring 17 feet on a side. Once below ground the sound changes; you lose tree and bird noises.

The ground plane around the hole, though a continuous plot of grass from above, is carried out on a projecting roof. It is a shallow recess supported by columns of wood 4 inches square. Thus, once below ground level, you are suddenly in a space that is essentially a courtyard open to the sky, suggesting Mexico—or Pompeii. In the center of each wall is a doorway into a four-sided enclosed passageway, the outer walls of which have openings into the dark earth. Thus on the basis of a schematic ground plan, Miss has constructed a flexible sequence from bright light to shaded arcade to dark corridor to darker recesses.

A low earth mound acts as a link between the chamber and a sloping field with three towers. (The Indian burial mounds in Ohio, incidentally, are to environmental artists what the Apollo Belvedere was to Renaissance sculptors.) The height of the towers varies from 18 feet to 15½ to 13. The sculptor has used timbers of the same size for all the towers, so that the largest can be entered easily, while the smallest is impenetrable. However, their basic design is the same, so that as one surveys the field, its widely separated structures at different distances and different heights, a fluctuating sense of scale withholds their precise location in suspense. Miss has used the steep field, bordered by woods, to brilliant effect, to create forms that are at once literal and evasive. Thus the angularity of the components is logical in terms of construction, but the relation between the towers is not what it seems to be. It is only as you approach each one individually that ambiguity of scale is forced to yield to the facts of size.

Miss's sculpture is carpentered, decently constructed but not smoothed and polished. This is an aesthetic decision geared to the scale on which she works. She wants the diagrammatic logic of the plans and the soundness of construction to be evident. By not lingering on material surfaces, she is able to declare an authoritative stake on space.

The complexity of interrelation of the sober elements is not a failure of clarity but the clear expression of a complex thought. This is shown by the title of this extensive work that enters

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the ground, models it (the mound), and builds on it. The title, "Perimeters/Pavilions/Decoys," was arrived at slowly. The three words do not identify the separate components, but seem to refer to the artist's concept as a whole. Perimeter is easy; it denotes the outer boundary of something and here we can be sure of two meanings: the 4-acre site as a whole but also the edges of the structures that she built on it. The word declares not only a sculptor's natural interest in space but brings in the related idea of territoriality (space with psychological overtones).

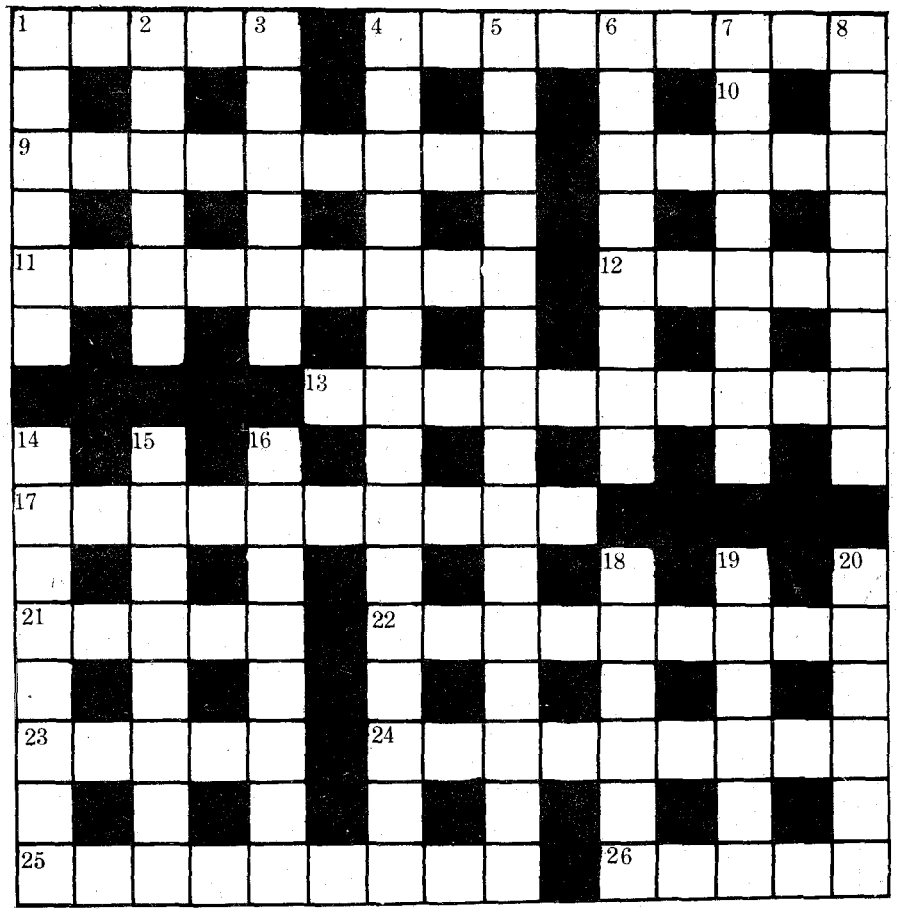
Pavilions are small buildings in gardens, often ornamental but precisely attuned to human scale. Their association with leisure should not divert us from the fact that they are as functional as telephone booths, though the functions are different. Thus the underground structure and the towers, especially the largest, which can be entered and climbed, are indisputably pavilions. The view from the tower, the retreat from sound and sun in the chamber, are both human services. The mound, for reclining against or viewing from, is also assimilable to this sense.

Decoys, according to my dictionary, lead one into traps and reflect radar waves misleadingly. The application of the word to Miss's work points up a chthonic aspect of the underground structure: first we climb into the ground; then, leaving the contracted sky, we follow her architectural cues and go underground, from patio to catacomb. And the perceptually misleading spatial aspect of the towers places them under the word decoy.

The Nassau County Museum is located off Northern Boulevard (25A) in Roslyn, two traffic lights west of the Glen Cove Road intersection. On the Long Island Expressway take Exit 39N; go 2 miles to 25A and turn left. At the second traffic light, opposite the Helena Rubenstein factory, turn right. The closest Long Island Railroad stations are Roslyn and Greenvale with short taxi rides to the museum. It is worth giving these details because Mary Miss's piece is remarkable in its physical embrace of the spectator and its conceptual subtlety. Environmental art has been discussed in these columns before (*The Nation*, June 24) and here is an exceptional opportunity to enter its precincts. Owing to a change of administration, it is unlikely that there will be future ventures of this kind in Roslyn: Miss's piece is the culmination of the museum's policy in this direction. While it is there it should be seen, both as a model of the environmental mode in sculpture and as a convincing work in itself. □

Crossword Puzzle No. 1744.

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 One way by which the 1-down measure their worth. (5)
4 Times change, and the date is uncertain, as might be guessed. (9)
9 You might be made more comfortable getting down from this. (5,4)
10 See 1 down
11 If it makes quite a bit of noise, you can suspect there's some hitch connected with it. (9)
12 Fear relating to a classical piper? (5)
13 By which 16 workers are paid? (Some would expect it to be rather sad going up or down.) (5,5)
17 In an immediately "becoming" way. (10)
21 A means of spreading things in such as a dive, when Jack goes to it. (5)
22 Does a hell of a construction job, thus getting tenure. (9)
23 Part of Omaha, if an entirely foreign place. (5)
24 Might you need more than one to see such an elaborate performance? (9)
25 Maxwell Anderson play, with the season well established. (9)
26 If you're doing this, you should recognize the wiles of a puzzler. (5)

DOWN

1 and 10 across Quitter? (One takes it on the lam.) (6,5)
2 An article on either side of the twisted end, reminding one of a certain range. (6)
3 Raven, as the Scots say. (6)
4 Learning with a word-catalog's enough for some teachers. (15)
5 What one might do with good food at a carry-out, or bad food at a restaurant. (4,2,2,5,2)
6 Nearly all about a mixed pile might tell you how much is left of the race. (8)
7 A conductor, perhaps. (4 down might hope to do it.) (8)
8 You might get soaked this way. (8)
14 It's a trifling matter to give the boot to a playwright! (8)
15 Marc Antony doubted Caesar had it. (8)
16 Where you might find the one of Reason is not for the mature! (5-3)
18 Hearthy? One could make valets of such. (6)
19 Sounds like mother's bossy! (You might see it listed in red capitals.) (6)
20 Proving summers can be dangerous. (6)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1743

ACROSS: 1 Flat on one's back; 9 Asiatic; 10 Richard; 11 and 21 across Change the watch; 12 and 15 across Thunderstruck; 14 Lunette; 17 Ousel; 19 Grapnel; 23 Bestow; 25 Militia; 26 Instant; 27 Share the wealth. DOWN: 1 Francisco; 2 Abigail; 3 Octagonal; 4 Ouch; 5 Earth metal; 6 Bacon; 7 Chapeau; 8 Odds; 13 Stagecraft; 15 Tennessee; 16 Keep watch; 18 Stealth; 20 Let fall; 21, 22 and 24 Time after time.

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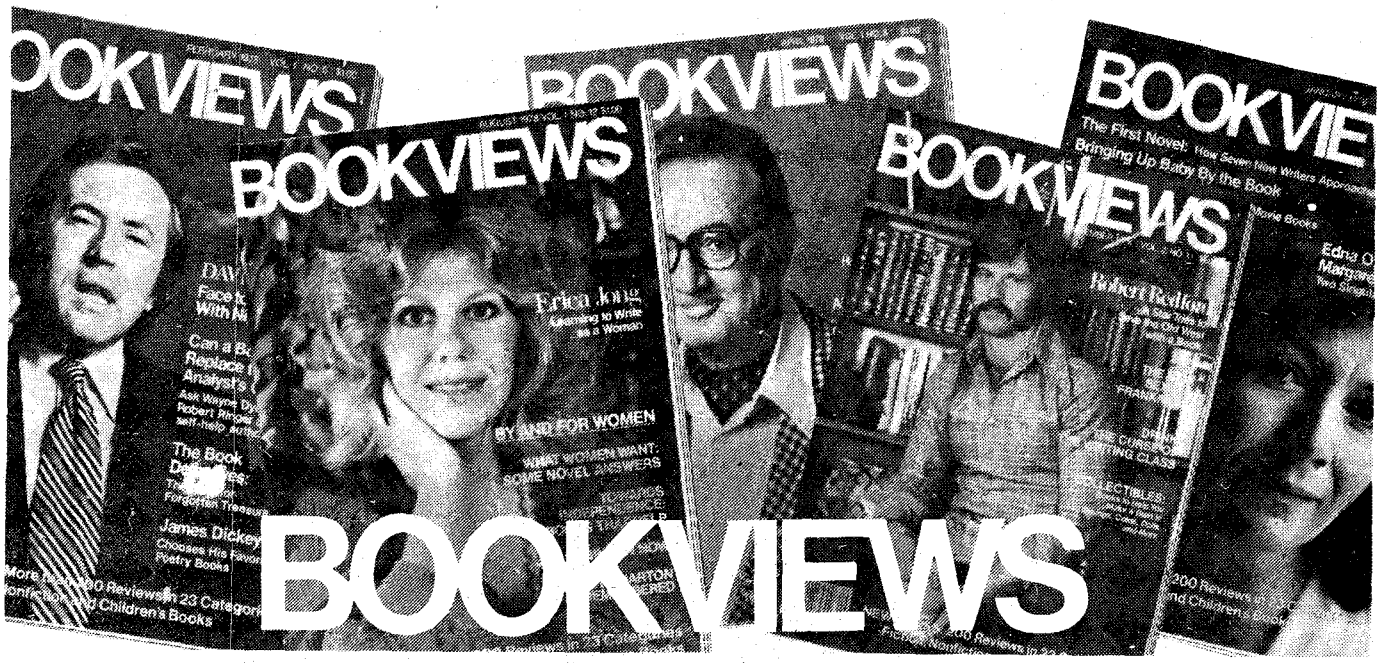

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